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EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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El Paso Community College, established in 1969, provides educational opportunities and support services to anyone residing in El Paso, Texas and El Paso County. EPCC is a multi-campus institution serving over 27,000 students. The college prepares individuals to improve their personal quality of life which allows them to contribute to their economically and culturally diverse community.

Chrysalis was founded by the English Discipline as an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff of EPCC, as well as the community, to showcase their literary and artistic talents.

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Chrysalis 2008

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 Richard Yañez
 David Lee Summers
 Ysella Fulton

chrys•a•lis (krīs'ə-līs) *n., pl. -lises or chrysalides* (krīs-sāl'ədēz'). *Entomology.* 1. The third stage in the development of an insect, especially of a moth or butterfly, enclosed in a firm case or cocoon; the **pupa**. 2. Anything still in the process of development. [Latin *crysallis*, from Greek *khrusallis*, the golden pupa of a butterfly, from *khrusos*, gold.]

Where Gravity Has No Meaning

Jon Castaneda

The house was an orange
 Plastered with citrus and smelling of cake
 A pool of bubbling cola filling my teeth
 With cavernous craters
 There was love there
 And people made mostly of legs
 And hands that pulled cheeks
 Mud pies that ground dirt into my mouth
 Bruises and cuts
 Hard surfaces
 Dogs that bite faces
 When tails are pulled
 Dead trees and hiding places
 More dirt
 Turtles eat lizards
 We watch
 Tickled half to death
 By red hair
 Bikes and dodging traffic
 Sun gets eaten by the mountain
 Cruel sleep creeps upon us
 We are rebels against the night
 Armed with television and secret candy
 With comic books and video games
 Jaws gnashing against pillows
 Until we are pulled into dark's embrace
 Freed into nether realms
 Where we escape old things
 And gravity has no meaning

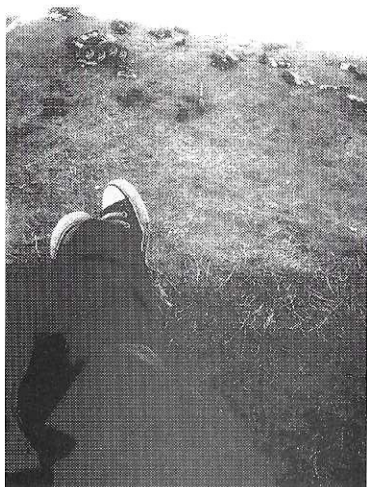
Shades of Blue

Michael Gaba

Perhaps today I really saw you
In all your varying shades of blue
The day we met, eyes of clear blue
Now staring emptily at a blank hospital wall

Fighting to survive, but not sure of the point
My mind reels with the memories we have made
It's much too early to close our book, though what to do
As my friend turns to a different world
Cold clammy skin in a cotton gown of green-blue

Just a shell of the person I once knew
And when the day comes to bury you
I'll weep with joy for the end of your misery
While the earth pools my tears of lonely blue.



Toy Cars

Juan F. Ramirez



Cold Feet

Juan F. Ramirez

Masterpiece

Serenity Garcia

Paint blue the hands that let you down
Pluck free the thorns to build your crown
Paint the lips that buried your mind
True to a father, gentle and kind
Paint blue the feet that carried you far
With an empty soul—sad and starved
Paint blue your fingers, for they could not capture
What you deserved, you good king's enrapture
Paint the faces loyal to you
Too human to know no such God would rue
Paint blue the arms always passionate to hug
In the tattered gowns at which illness tugged
Paint blue a temple, as it hangs
Hear new on its doors the Christian bangs
Dye blue the heart you never found
Tried to the Jews you couldn't astound
"Paint blue my fate, for I do not fear it!
Into thy hands I commend my spirit"

Red

Lisa Gonzalez

A lost love letter,
Untimely words,
Yelling out unwantedly.

A tremor in my heart,
An evil in your bones,
A tainted reverie.

A hell-ish joy ride,
Incriminating drips.
A fork in the road.

An emotion's fading,
An unsteady pace,
A brand new hollow.

A century of fallen dreams,
A light year of bliss,
Melting away tragically.

The bitter side of me,
The fury in your voice,
Movie scene tragedy.



Mario Solorzano

The Fair

Lydia Arenas

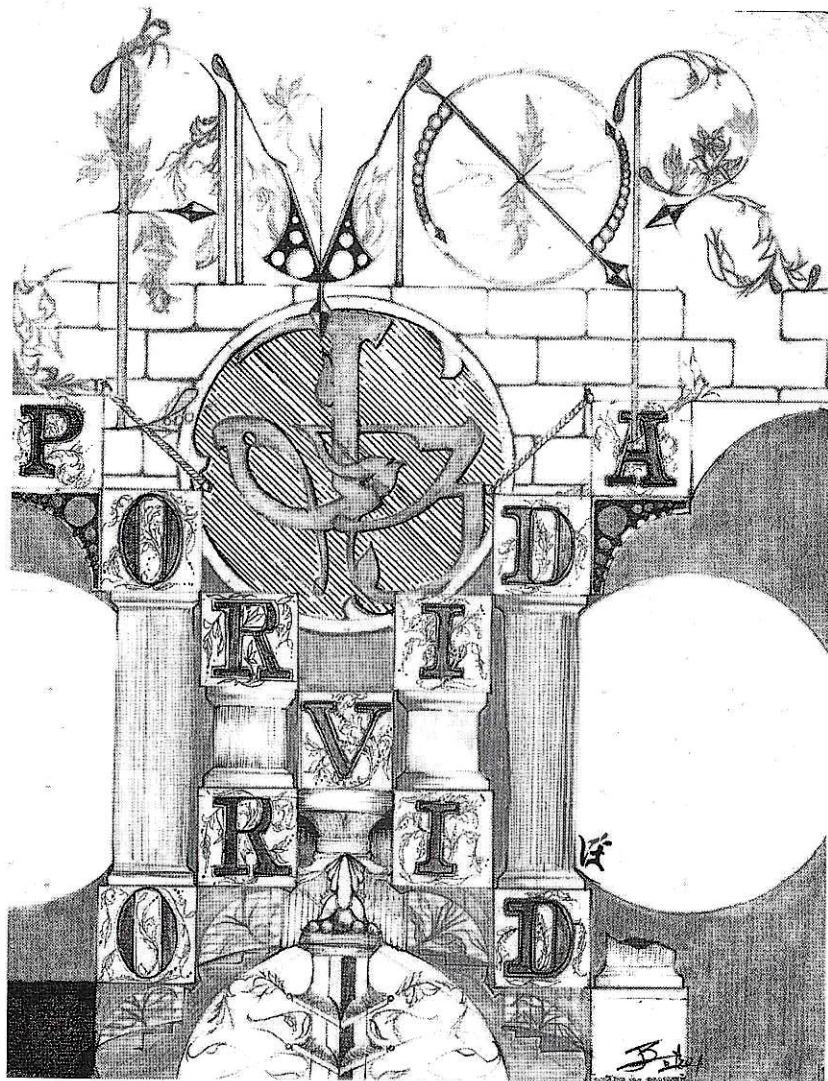
Bright lights.
Red, blue, white.
Happy hovering and hollering,
Maneuvering and tolerating the excited screams.
I-scream. You-scream,
Not for ice cream but for one more
Ride on this turbulent, twisting, torpedo of speed.

Head, upside down.
Waiting for the exhilarating fall.
We build momentum
Inside this clock's pendulum-like motion.
Time stands still
I'm feeling kind of ill
From all of this killer, Kamikaze, crazy commotion.

The ferris wheel's a sight for sore eyes,
Highs and lows.
Children young and at heart.
The lovers kissing.
City lights, star-bright,
And rainbows array of colors,
Like poppies in the spring.

Carousel, the ring
Did anybody find it?
Mirrors of people.
This house is deceiving.
Spin the apple once a-leaving.

We've had fun,
Good night all!
See you next year.
Leaves of November, cones of December...
See you Next Spring!



Amor Por Vida

Jose A. Blanco

The City of White Stone

Kathleen Alcalá

Once, there was a woman with long black hair who lived in a city of white stone. The streets were filled with white peacocks that only ate white corn. They screamed at dawn like children being murdered.

There were no children in this city, only adults. This made them very sad.

One day, a man came to the city. He played a flute, and when he played, it sounded like children laughing. This made the people happy.

The man told them that, if every one of them gathered in the plaza at the next full moon, something magic would happen. They all wanted to do it, all except the woman with long black hair. There was something she was trying to remember, something about full moons and midnight, but try as she might, she could not. Finally, the others convinced her to join them.

Finally, one midnight, at the full moon, all the people of the white city gathered and held hands in a circle, while the man stood in the center and played his flute. He played a strange, lilting melody, and soon the eaves and bushes around the plaza began to rustle. It was like the stirring of many feathers.

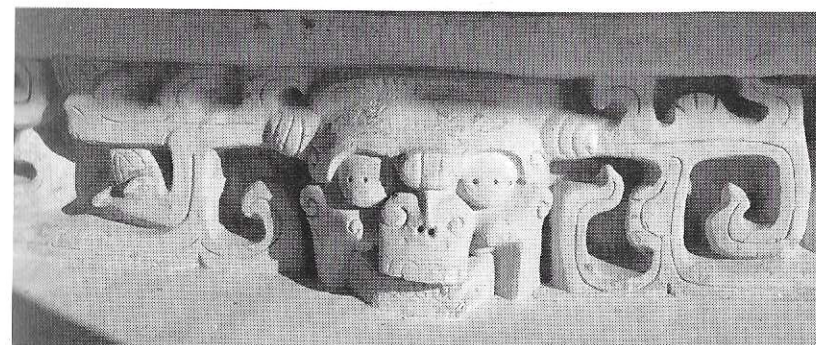
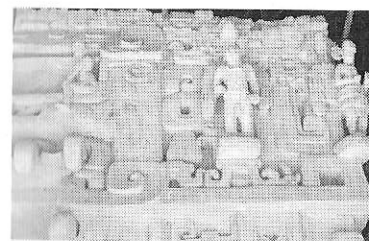
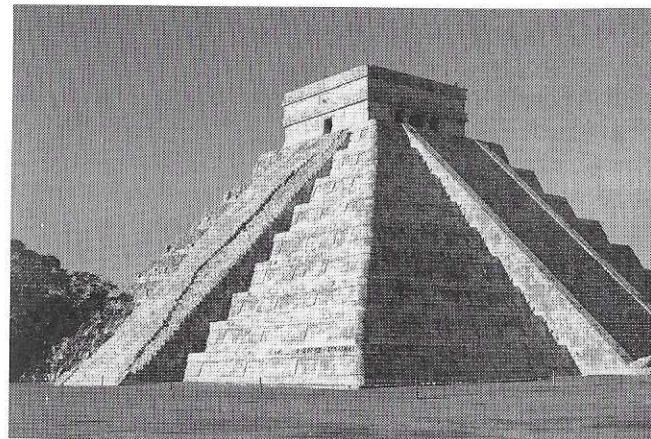
After awhile, children came running into the plaza, laughing, and jumped into the arms of the adults. They had been the peacocks all along, put under a curse by a bruja. But the woman with long black hair was gone. She had turned into a peacock, for she had been the witch all along. Today, if you visit the city of white stone, you can still hear her, screaming at dawn like a murdered child.

Kathleen Alcalá is the author of a short story collection *Mrs. Vargas and the Dead Naturalist*, and the novels: *Spirits of the Ordinary*, *The Flower in the Skull*, and *Treasures in Heaven*. Her collection of essays, *The Desert Remembers My Name* is now available from the University of Arizona Press. Her novels are a trilogy set in nineteenth century Mexico and the American Southwest. Her nonfiction has been produced for public radio

and she co-wrote, with director Olga Sanchez, a play based on her novel, *Spirits of the Ordinary* that was produced by The Miracle Theater of Portland, Oregon. Her work is included in *Inlandia*, a recent anthology of writings about inland California edited by Gayle Watawa and published by Heyday Books, and the forthcoming, *Latinos in Lotusland*, edited by Dan Olivas.

A graduate of Stanford University, Alcala's work has received the Western States Book Award, the Governor's Writers Award, a Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Award, and a Washington State Arts Commission Award for work on her new book, *Cities of Gold*. She is the co-founder and contributing editor for *The Raven Chronicles*, she has served on the board of Richard Hugo House and the advisory board of Con Tinta, Field's End and the Centrum Writers Conference. She teaches creative writing at workshops and programs in Washington State and elsewhere.

Kathleen Alcala was born in California of Mexican parents and growing-up spent parts of every summer in Chihuahua, Mexico with her cousins. Today she is a member of Los Nortenos, is married and has one son and lives and works in the Pacific Northwest.



Robert Yarbrough

Words in the Dawn of the Night

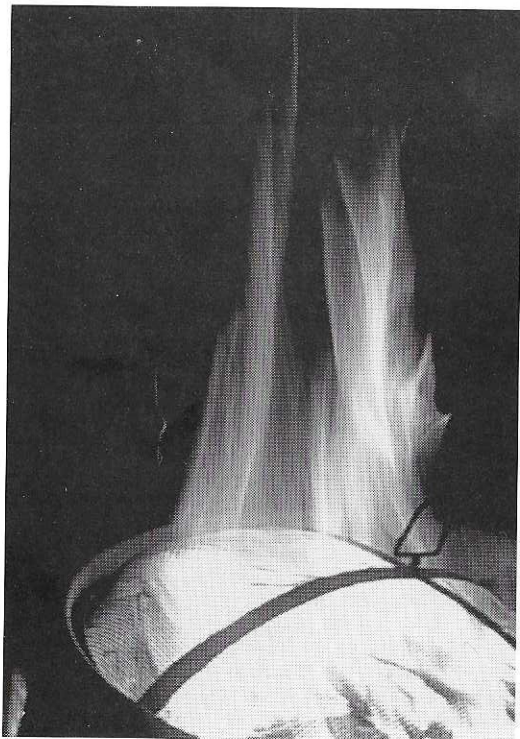
Omar Santos

In the dawn of the night, where darkness surrounds the moon, our eyes were captured by each other's enchanted words.

Those words, sweet as sugar, words that are a mystery, words that interpreted a story, of each other's unknown words. No reflection can be seen upon the light of the moon, only our words, that conquer our minds and soul. Millions of unknown feelings crawling all over our bodies, touching every sense, every thought, by words that stabbed each other hearts.

Time is our savior. Time will solve the mystery of a thousand words our eyes have seen along the bright moon of the night. How long will it last? Will time unite two separate worlds, or will it be a meaningless dream, fading away into ashes?

No one can tell how far will this goes, as our reflection seems to be still so far away, but every dawn of the night, where darkness surrounds the moon, words will be there in our hearts.



Zaira Xitlalitl Aguilar

El viajero sin Esperanza

Ileana Prieto

El viajero sin esperanza no tiene
Nada de comer ni de beber.
Ni si quiera para la mente.
Los pies rotos sin zapatos.
Los ojos llenos de lágrimas.
Un grito de angustia que nadie puede escuchar.
Una llama de fuego en el corazón.
Deshecho de la sociedad.
Solo con la soledad y la historia de nada.
Casi muerto de la desesperación de la vida.
La vida ha hecho un prejuicio.
No lo ha ayudado y no lo ha salvado.
Quién le ayudara a caminar hacia el camino
De nada...
Porque ya casi es nada. Y si no
fuera por estas palabras nadie
se daría cuenta.



Michael Gaba

Overhead

Michael Beavers

Scrutinize blood-shot watering eyes
Softened by years, loss
And lies

Whisper recurring lives of leaves
High in the branches
Of trees

Crane stiff creaking wrinkled neck
Twisted life, weak
A wreck

Luminous rustling fervent fiery Sun
Made yellow glowing gold
By Hertzprung

Stems cyclic endowment God's Will
Or the trusted retreat
Of chlorophyll

Casual stare thick mourning haze
Dormant caustic soft
Middle-age

Birds' perch, leaves turn only to fly
Cooing cut loose
And die

Stoic overhead harbor hiding thieves
High in the branches
Of trees

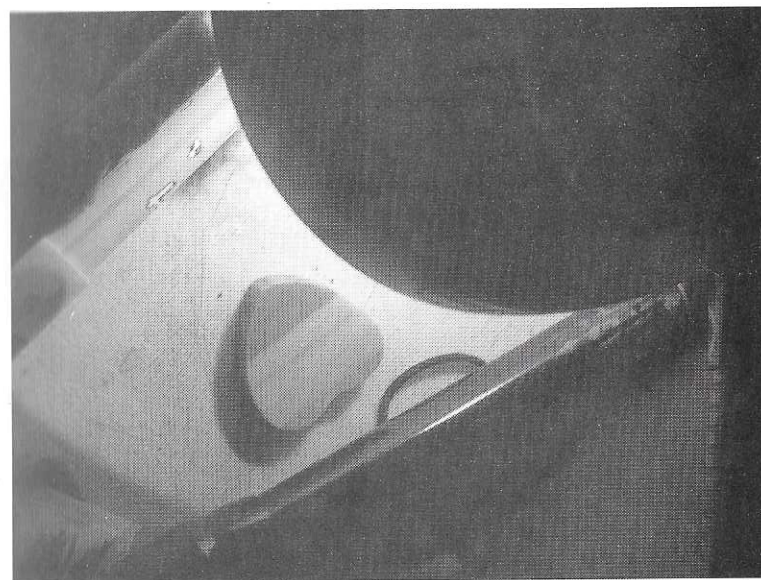


Their Hideaway
Juan F. Ramirez

Mrs. Mime

Cleopatra Arevalo

I live in a black and white world
Where no one talks, where no one cries
Where thick makeup cover up expressions
And bright red lips keep unspoken words
While all of you believers enjoy my performance
I have the thought of a genocide
With black blood covering white faces
And a happy piano ending playing a melody of solitude and sorrow
I'm a backstabber with no heart
A two-faced liar with no soul
The truth is that I hate everything I do
That's why I am Mrs. Mime
I don't speak, I don't make any sound
I pretend, I act ... I'm imaginary



Aida E. Gonzalez

The Changing Winds

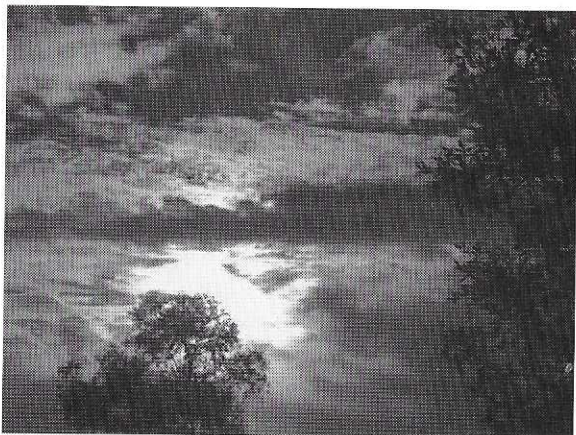
Rosa Pachea

Out through my window,
I see them, the changing winds.
And they're angry, angry from all the pain.
As it violently tears through everything in sight

I then see a drop, leading to a downpour.
I wipe it off my face, but more drops trail.
Followed by swallowing my pride
Thinking to myself why, why am I doing this?

I am seeing myself disappear.
The mist is ready to take me
I no longer see the ground
And then, I see nothing.

As I am writing this
My mind is alive
It empties to the page, my pen falls.
The violent wind stops.



Aida E. Gonzalez

A Dream in September

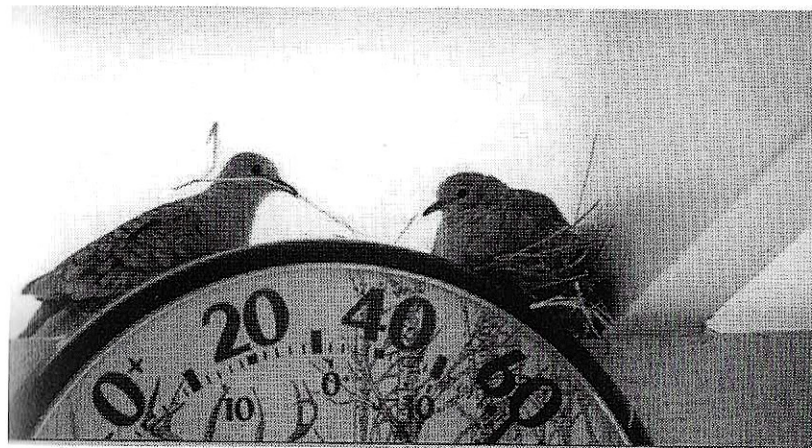
Lilly Little

You kissed me last night
among the giant trees in that far away land
known only to us.

And as you held me in your arms,
you filled the empty canvas of my life
in one moment
of time.

My eyes opened only to caress an empty space,
and in the agony of this sorrow
memories spoke in its place.

A dream in September,
a gift and a calling
to remember,
you.



Louis H. Valles

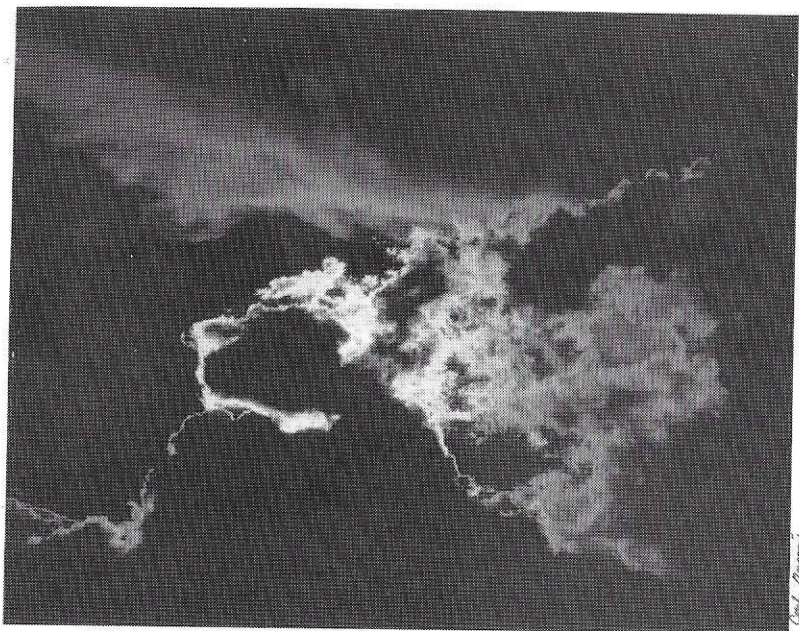
Seven Angels are Falling in the North

Aldo Amparan

I see seven angels falling in the north,
Their hearts are broken; their wings are torn.

Upon the sea they fall unbound
And desperately aim swimming to the ground.

My heart filled with sadness, I start to cry
And to God for mercy I now pray.



Fire in the Sky

Caryl Barquin

Angels Traveling Within Wind Shifts

David Hernandez

At the dawn of a new day,
There come angels
Traveling within wind shifts.

They move like the wind,
Soar like the eagles,
And fly gracefully like the dove.

The clouds,
With their enormous form,
Are abundant with their presence.

The skies,
Along with the empty spaces
Are filled with life.

Words of independence
Reign down upon
The wandering travelers.

All is peaceful;
All is harmonious,
Within the wind shifts.

Afterwards,
The angels disappear like shadows
And await the next day of dawn.

Moving Forward

Ileana Prieto

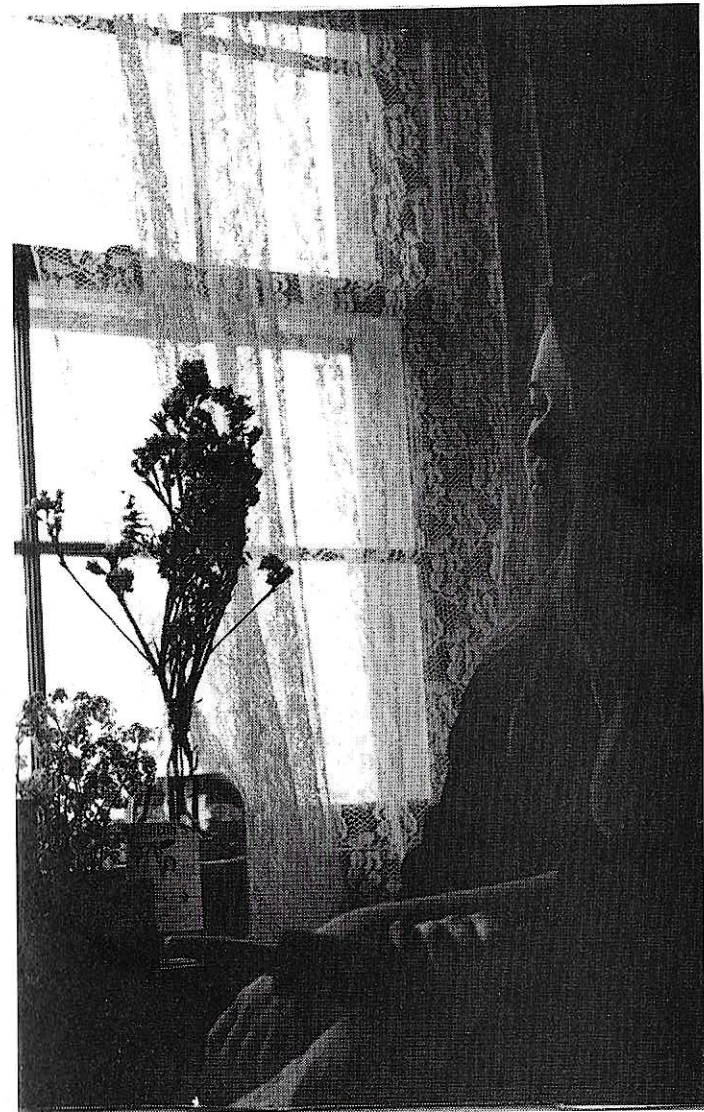
The moonlight fills the empty glass.
Memories fill the box.
The redness of a rose fills the jar.
Written words fill the page.
Emptiness fills the spoken words.
Moving forward, step by step.
Steps that once left footprints.
Imprinted in the sands of time.
Imprinted to be remembered.

Light shines upon, illuminating.
Dark steps taken, erasing.
Gone with the wind, leaving it behind.

Walking ahead.
Footprints filled with trust; no fear.
Fear was left behind; hand in hand with trust.
Moving forward, step by step.
Trust guiding; love inviting
Memories fill the box.



Michael Gaba

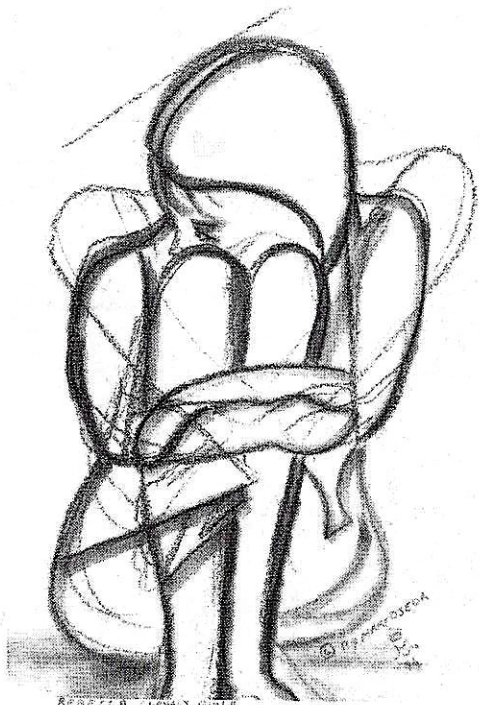


Ysella Fulton Slavin

From Calm to Breezy Winds

Cynthia Herrera

Like broken angels without wings,
Her breast was removed with no warning.
Like a sharp ax cutting through wood,
She felt her freedom being stripped for her.
A dress would never make her feel the same.
She would never feel like a woman again.
This same thought ignites her body with fear and anger.
For the kissing of death is near and the thought of a short life span;
Both soothe and discourage her at the same time.
Yet still a small glimpse of hope,
Reappears with the changing of the winds.



Rebecca "Lonely Girl"
Mary T.M. Ojeda



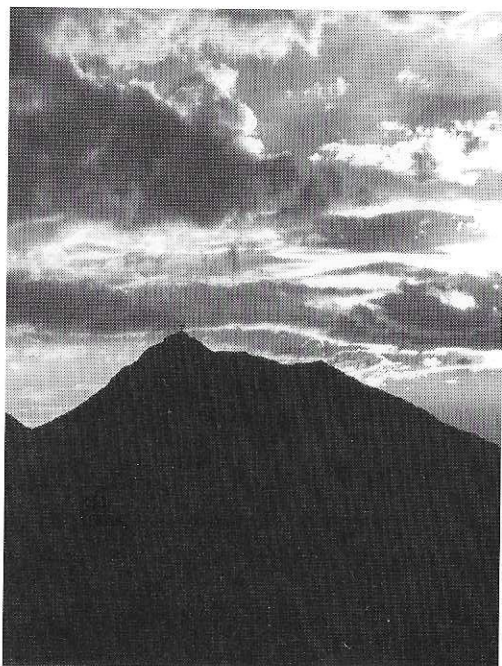
Nostalgia

Hector Bernal

I Remember

Gloria Michaud

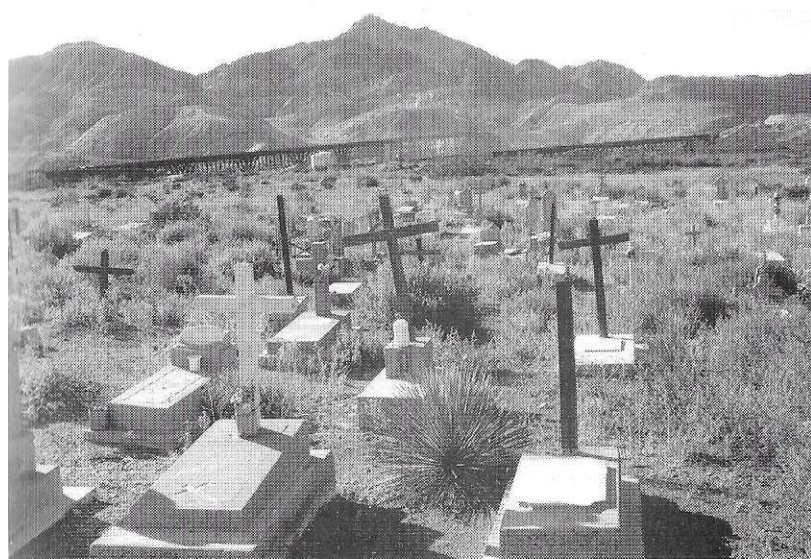
I remember the traveling midnight clouds, pounding thunder and striking bolts of lightning,
A dusty gray cloth covered the clear night sky and shimmering stars,
Flashes of bright light every so often captured my attention,
Seconds later, droplets of fresh water pierced the ground with scattered dots,
I gazed up with my eyes closed and at that moment I was caught in a mist of luxurious water,
The sweet aroma of the rain colliding with the earth overwhelming my sense of scent,
The troubles and the shadows of the world seemed to fade as I was spellbound in time.



Sunset and Sky
Carmen Armendariz

I remember emptiness and a slipping tear down my pale cheek,
My hurting heart dreading for the truth of reality,
My eyes watering and yearning for security,
My mind reflecting and thriving for what it could have been rather than what it was,
Screams within me desiring to burst in a sudden moment,
Enduring the screeching cries for help and throbbing dilemmas,
I was left without help; only black and misery resided on my mitts.

I remember gibberish baloney from a big shot's mouth,
Words frequently spoken, the majority of them said in a repulsive manner,
To me they signified zilch but as letters jointed together,
To others it implies harsh and inconsiderate language,
It only makes me ponder why people can be how they are, cruel and immature for their age,
Why listen when terms resembling rubbish isn't fact or true.



Love Lost II

Reyna Hernandez

The Silence
(Failure to communicate)

Tammy Galvan

The silence, what difference does it make
What is it going to take
They don't know that you're a fake
I feel I'm drowning in the lake

The silence, who is it going to kill
I'm going to die in this battlefield
I don't know how to yield
They tell me, "What's the big deal?"

The silence, you can wait it out
Me, I just want to about
I'm not happy without a doubt
But your more into, GET THE LEAD OUT

The silence, who or what will save me
Am I willing to set you free
Or is this my destiny
Oh well, cheer up, I still have originality

How to Decorate a Corkboard

Carolina Monsivais

Bring out boxes of items that once adorned offices and cubicles. Stack recent news articles next to the boxes. Sort through them and select carefully. With newsprint stained fingers pin the article about a woman shot and killed by her husband in the center. Place a funeral card above it, the girl who shot and killed herself at 13 in front of her abusive boyfriend. The notes the girls in group wrote in her memory should surround it. Above place the sticker *If you aren't outraged you aren't paying attention*. Find the pink cards with black crosses you and your friend made for a presentation where you were told that the cause was noble but there were more important things to concern yourself with. One card reads *Se Busca* and the other *Ni Una Más*. They were removed from the walls at the women's center because they carried religious connotation. Place them below the article and frame them with postcards one with the La Virgen de Guadalupe with leg raised ready to kick; the other a picture of a blue flower surrounded by the phrase *resistance to the ever growing logic of the Empire*. Pin the envelope containing your families' letters close to the postcards. Over the envelope drape your notes on the language of water in desert as it soaks sand and hands become muddied digging through layers of stories. Place a small replica of the Aztec goddess with severed limbs encased within the moon. Her light guides you through your tasks. All of this rests between two small prints. A woman laying on a cot her back slightly bare, revealing slashes. A woman half skeleton, half flesh standing between shadow and light. Mita y Mita. Line your business cards along the bottom each with a different title: residential advocate, schools educator, outreach advocate, youth outreach counselor and residential advocate. Remind yourself: this is my office now.

Desert Flowers

Martha E. Sanchez

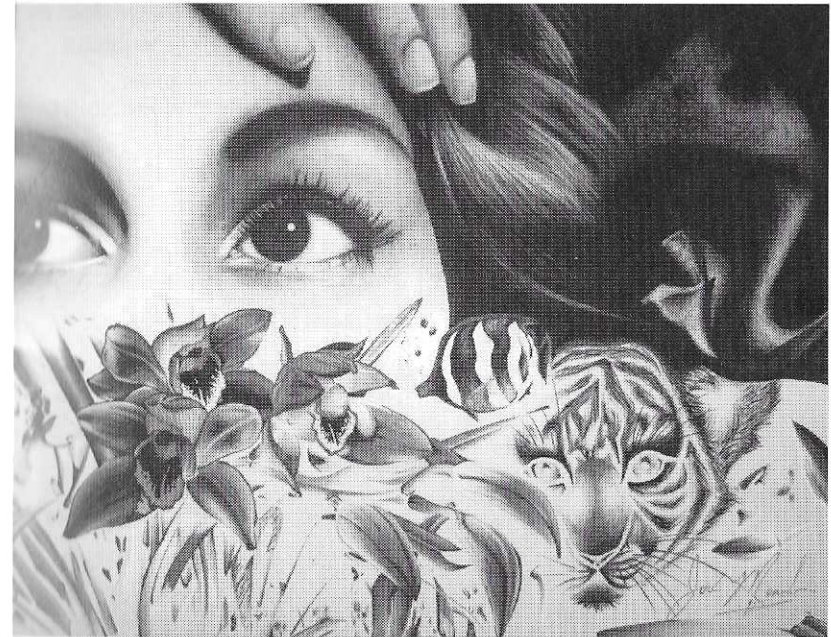
We started knowing since our early years of blended cultures and the conquest years, of father's whispers in our tender ears...he called us desert flowers, silk like petals of a special blend. Bronze concoction, rare ensemble, special, flawless seeds of the Mestisaje clan

Kindred spirits, blood of fusion, oozing fragrance of the Rio Grande—soft reflection, bold charisma, gentle as the desert sand. Desert flowers, rarest radiance nurtured by the morning light. Day break beauties, fresh as rain drops settled on your flowing manes—father's tribute to a plan

Desert flowers, mellow sirens, fiery torrents envied by the hearts of man...sweetest voices, cordial echoes chanting in the thick of night—Desert flowers, fragrant splendor which adorn a stretch of earth—scented flowers, skin like honey—rare bloods mixing through your fine spun veins

Fair brown maidens, striking torsos, pride of culture that is rich and grand...Desert flowers pure as moonlight to a father's eyes, burgeoned off spring, pride of conquest in the frontier land. Mestisaje brewed in battle, flowers growing of a unique blend...father's treasure of the Southwest span.

Seasoned daughters blessed with birthright, father's praises at the break of day...still enchanted woman's presence in the wild of night—father's sayings serenading in his silver years. Desert flowers, he still murmurs as the sun bows down. Seed of heroes, proud blood spreading, full of wisdom and true tears



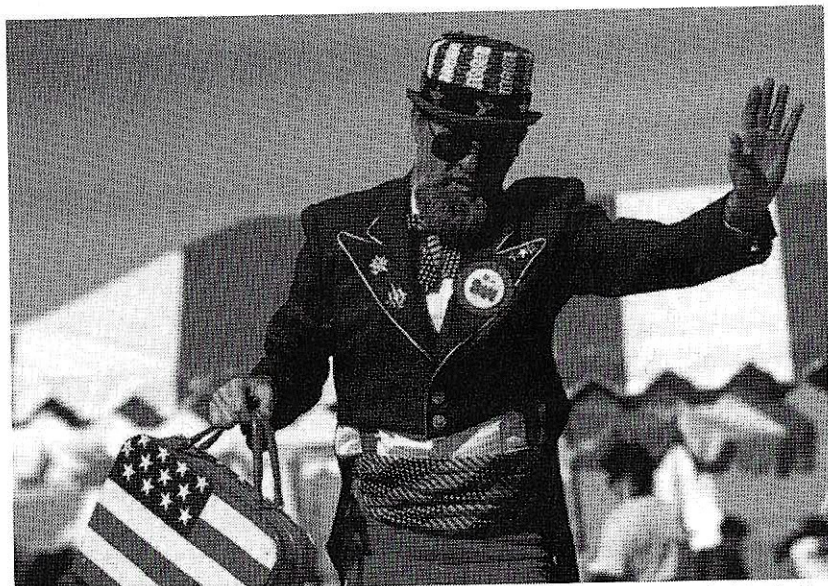
Lileh

Jose Mendoza

Puzzled

Graciella Ogaz

Because I need glasses, was that a reason not to see?
Who you turned into I could not believe
Turned my back and you easily deceived
I handed you my thoughts, my dreams and every fantasy
You did not hesitate
You did not shake
Spilling my secrets to whoever you met
You broke my heart and now
I try to glue the pieces of my broken trust.



Uncle Sam

Louis H. Valles

Empty Streets Need Warmth

Juan Ramirez

I'm making my own castle, i'll be the ruler of some imaginary place, with
imaginary servants, and imaginary scenery.

Growing out of my childish ways, and wearing big boy shoes.

Marketed as a model who's been having a drug problem since the early
90's.

I've got no soul, I pawned it for a guitar.

Playing at corners, wishing someone would throw a quarer in my hat.

Walking on fresh pavement, just yearning to be stepped on.

Rolling around a grassy field, getting wet when it rained. Staring out of a
car window, wondering what the person beside me was thinking.

She was probably thinking of her rage, or maybe he was thinking about his
alcoholic family.

Empty streets need warmth, even if warmth means death.

Cherokee Cajun Woman

James T. Knot

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without spending time as it passes by
with us rolling on down the road

And old Rocky never knew what his place could do-
to that Cherokee-Cajun heart
With the lights down low and the beer so cold
there's no better place you could start

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without splendid time as it passes by
with us on down the road

You know she gave me a call to begin it all
and said "I've never asked a man before"
"but let's meet tonight if that's all right."
And I headed straight for my door

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without splendid time as it passes by
with us on down the road

When seven rolled around, I poured a cold one down
and I wondered if she'd really show
Then her green eyes smiled, she'd been there a while
while Rocky played something slow

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without splendid time as it passes by

with us on down the road
We took it from there to make a matchless pair
now we've felt a sunset or two
and we married in may after a rainy day
From there, I guess it kinda grew
(or while an orange sky burned from blue)

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without splendid time as it passes by
with us on down the road

Now I could sing all day on through the night
and do it all once again
And I could search for words to complete the song
but you know this song'll never end

Life with a Cherokee-Cajun woman
is a life you could never know
without splendid time as it passes by
with us on down the road



Pa's Ol' House
Caryl Barquin

Two Voice Poem Deafening Satire

Nellie Ugarte

I am Ophelia: To be or not to be a manipulated vessel is my question.
I am Lady Macbeth: To surrender or not to surrender to the filthy air that goads me is my question.

I am Ophelia: I loved a man crawling with indecision.
I am Lady Macbeth: I loved a man yearning for stolen power.

I am Ophelia: My vapid voice flings my flattened sounds as they bounce listlessly.
I am Lady Macbeth: My whetted words like the hot fingers of flames tempt you to drink my tonic.

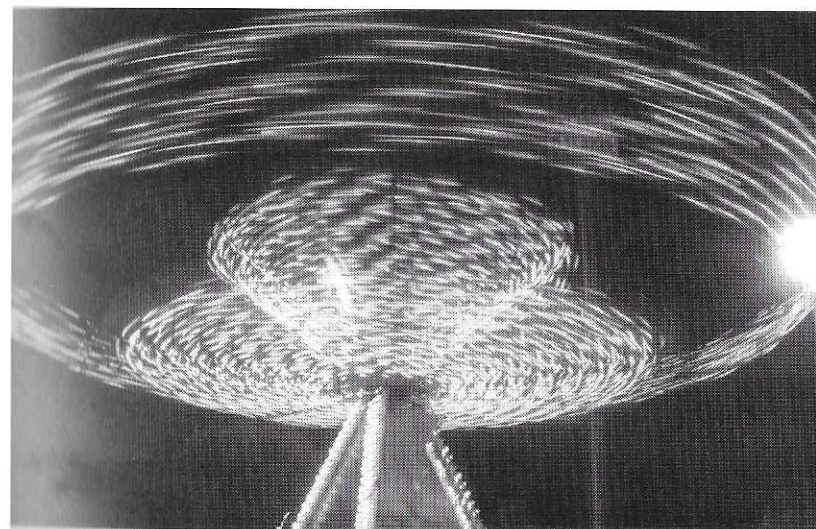
I am Ophelia: Searching in every castle crevice for rising rosemary, I contemplate the wending water as it calls to me.
I am Lady Macbeth: Searching for a crooked crown that glitters with old dust, I swallow my conscience and grow bleeding thorns.

I am Ophelia: I hear my thoughts crumbling into violet bits of smoke.
I am Lady Macbeth: I see my wrists sprouting claws that prick me into slumber.

Transition

Jose Mendoza

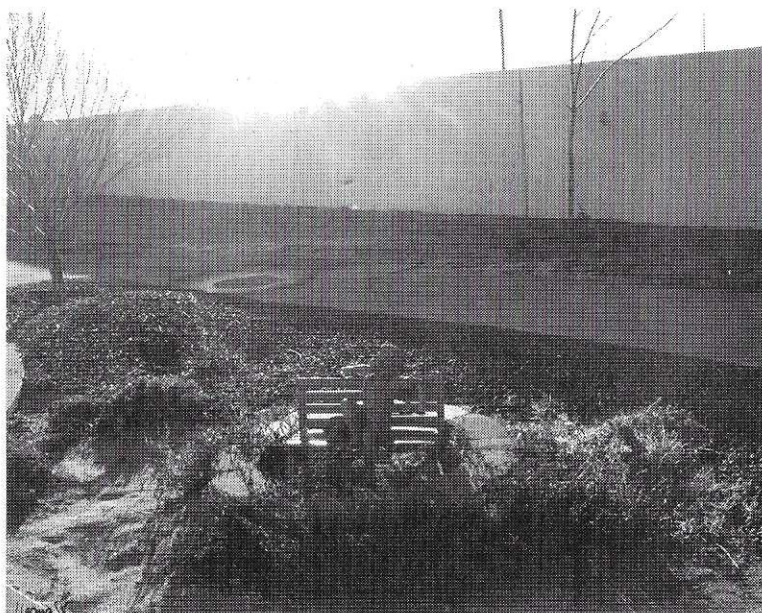
Transition
Once lost in darkness,
in the quiet solemn night.
To lay there cold and frightened,
asking God for light.
All senses become useless,
there is nothing left but fear.
With no such thing as distance,
no need to see or hear...



Fast Lights

Isaac Medina

Agradesco al Señor por tenerte y ser mi madre
 En mi edad de rebeldía yo no te comprendía
 Pero tu presencia nunca la perdía
 pues yo siempre la requería
 Mis errores fueron decepción y la causa de tu frustración
 Pero tu presencia nunca la perdía
 Mi pasado perdonaste
 ¿De dónde te nace tanto amor?
 Me lo preguntaba noche y día
 Cambiando el camino ahora veo mi destino
 Que tu siempre seguirás conmigo.



Spoken To From Up Above

Ileana Prieto

Placing my heart into David Hernandez,
 I silently fell,
 And fell, and fell.

As I fell,
 I suddenly got the urge to stop
 And fly over a mountain late one evening

This experience
 Was unlike any other experience
 Because I felt everlasting and never ending.

As I was flying I felt the strangest thing,
 A lizard came to me late one evening
 And I felt the urge to kiss it and like it.

One thing I did notice
 Was the fact that his tongue was missing,
 I almost thought my mouth took it.

But then it revealed itself to be the lizard king
 And I prayed that all the fear of loss
 Will cease the breath of newcomers.

All of a sudden, I awoke,
 Only to find out that I was near my pet lizard's cage
 And its face was right in front of mine.

Apology

Teresa Duran

Fierce, unrelenting frigid wind cuts to my bones,
I fight my way down this path to the holiest of holiest
Memorial for the fallen dead.
I reach the silent, cold, empty chapel, a candle flickering
In semi-gloom, amidst pictures of the dead.
Old Glory stands watch, folds cold and stiff,
Their silent sentinel, witness to the ultimate sacrifice.

I try to pray and fail – the ghosts too many, too frail
To reach, still searching for understanding and light.
Perhaps the flickering candle will steady and provide
The beacon, take the place of my unsaid prayers.

I touch Old glory, stiff, cold, beneath my own cold fingers,
Try to apologize for all the indignant suffering under false pretences.
I choke on the words and walk out to face the glacial winds howling
Down these northern New Mexico snow-covered mountains.

Leña

James Gonzalez

Dusty, silent, stacked in rows,
Two cords of sunshine,
Summer sunrays
Fibered in concentric rings,
Cut up, split,
Weeping resinous tears,
Which gum up,
A sticky protestation
From which there is no court of appeal—
From a fallen tree
All make firewood,
The leña of all our generations
Burnt up long ago
In the wood-burning stoves
Of Coyote, Guadalupita, Chacón, and la Colonia.
Gone are those
Delightful flames that Grandma Luisita
Made to dance
Beneath the pot of bubbling beans
And the kettle of aromatic coffee—
Firewood of the past and firewood of the present,
Stacked up in my own woodshed,
Awaiting the cold days
When they will advance
To the doors of a hot dancehall
(Just warming up at 451 degrees Fahrenheit)
To ignite and kick up their heels—
To crackle and pop
In a yellow blue green orange red display of vitality,
Commemorating fifty years on a mountainside
Or verdant valley,
The oak, pine, juniper, cottonwood, and mulberry
Dancing for us,
Warming our hearts.



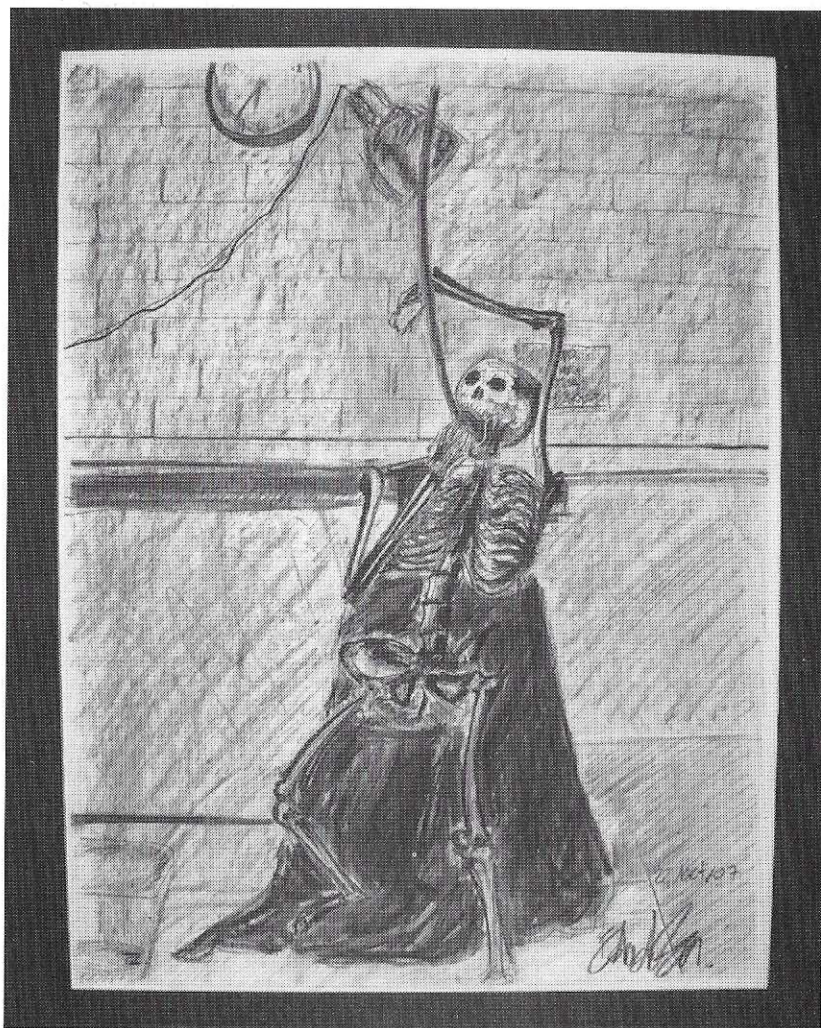
bythebarrel

Jesus Aguilera

Selfless

Jon Castaneda

Facets of light beings
 Ghost dreams and lucid revelations
 Winds caress branches of possibilities
 Urging towards a path with heart
 I walk the timeline I've chosen
 Reflecting my memories through this flesh
 This is who I am
 This brown skin, willing dreams into reality
 I have faith in you and me
 I've nothing to prove
 I've seen my worth in the desperate eyes of lost children
 In the creative inspiration I have provided
 In the words and simple actions of this body
 In this piece of eternal energy that I am
 My will is my companion
 I have faith in you
 Push me forward into certainty
 Entice my sense of adventure and wonder
 Reveal myself anew
 Cleansed and focused
 Living this moment always
 Being in this complexity
 Loving without expectation
 Centered
 Timeless
 One
 With
 All



Skull

Eduardo Uranga Sen

These Words Carved in Blood Stone

Leslie Council

What was I supposed to do?
 What did you expect...
 To watch me chase the words, flying from my mouth
 Like flying serpents on a rampage
 Splattering blood
 In such vile, explosive, cruel rage
 Then watch them
 Devour your penance
 Without any indication
 Of releasing you from purgatory
 Without conscience, slithering away
 No words have I felt to say
 None that I can allow escape
 Exiled
 From my father's garden
 Playing with skeletal birds
 As my heart hardens
 Witness to my massacre
 Feathers float in the wind
 Sewn my lips and bitten my own tongue
 Who am I to dictate
 This jury like a mad mob pointing
 Out your crimes
 When I can't even own up to mine

It's the next generation
 Whose neck lay on the chopping block
 Who suffers for our deeds
 Done in the garden
 Our secrets hang from the tree
 Like poison apples
 Shedding infected seeds...

Imagination

Xavier "Angel X" Thomas

I am not a painter

I don't have the artistic hand that shells out paintings that are immortal
through walls or canvases

I am simple with my thoughts, strong with my words

I am a writer

I paint for you a picture of words

Through imagination and emotion I create the endless boundaries

With my words I create a world you've never been to.

Where you travel with your mind's eye over desolate lands

Where you see over rivers, mountains, and the green landscape of the wild

Say you were able to go to a place you have never been to

I can make you angry with a character you have never meet

Shed a tear for a person you've never come across

Feel their pain and sorrow

From my words I can make you relieve your own suffering

This is the strength of my words and the power of your imagination

In the Wee Hours

David Acosta

I take pen to paper, a keyboard under my fingers,
And like a pianist, my composure is erratic,
And what I compose – shows, exactly that.

Take a look at my rhyme, study my syntax, if you have the time?
Just a group of verbs – surrounded by words.
Notice my nouns – nothing grand, don't you agree?
See with me, it's all about the plain, mundane, practice of life.

Ah, but consider my ideas.
And as you read –
You may notice,
That I've managed to breed –
Certain little patterns in your precious little head, enough said,
I've lost my composure – due to certain exposure –
I apologize; I was only looking for closure.

A simple disclaimer,
When taking pen to paper,
Try not to cross all your t's or dot all your i's
It makes for better reading.



Romance in Venezia

Aileen A. Escarcega



Parisian Night

Aileen A. Escarcega

Butterflies

Edna Contreras

Nothing hurts more than your lips.
So soft and gentle,
Yet painful and cruel.
They are the opium of my soul.
The blindfold to my understanding.
Your eyes,
So cold,
Can't breath!!
Suffocate into this madness that is
Incurable, unhealable.
The rush of boiling blood made,
Of desire, of contempt.
A bittersweet dream that I can't wake from
I detest it.
Yet I can't leave it.
The opiate pain brings Satisfaction.
Eager for more, even when my heart can't take another dose.
Numbing my body till I have lost all my conscience.
The effect of the Butterfly has taken place.
Its deadly kiss has sealed my escape.
Fluttering its wings upon my face...
Giving me the oxygen I need to live for.
Breathe in the pain,
All of your existence.
For it has settled in with all its
Entirety.
Bringing about obliviousness to all that is
True.
Can't seem to see anything else
But my hunger for the opium you hold.
Seduced by hypnotic use of your wings.
I am powerless to my own mind.
My heart blindly guides me though

This dark forest that is
Your heart.
Running towards comfort that will never appear.
Yet your wings still keep me here;
Broken, numb, but surely alive.
Alive only for the taste of your lips.
They are the very root of my existence,
As well as the reason for my soul's mortality.
A cruel angel set in my destiny.
How can I make you see
That your charm
Is killing me!!!
Tearing me and breaking me apart.
Managing, somehow, to steal my heart.
Yet, what use is it to me
When you see things
Differently.
I can't deal with the truth.
A truth that is only
Reality.
Butterflies were meant to roam free.
You were never meant for me.



Butterfly 5

Joyce Whiteside

You Are the Woman

Vincent Anthony Norwood

You are the woman and everything in life now seems to rhyme;
Your smile warms my soul with green grass and sunshine;
It is you who has brought to my face this irrepressible smile;
It's a smile that has eluded me for such a very long while.

Why does my heart tremble and like butter slowly melt?
Your presence makes me feel things I never before have felt;
Why does my love burn like hot embers from deep within?
Your presence makes me do things and true love is where it all begins.

You are the woman who has filled me with so much happiness;
It's a dream I can't escape from whenever we are bathing in
togetherness;
You are the woman who has made me want to rhyme in this way;
I want to spend my life loving and caring for you each and every day.



Interior

Hector Bernal

Travelers

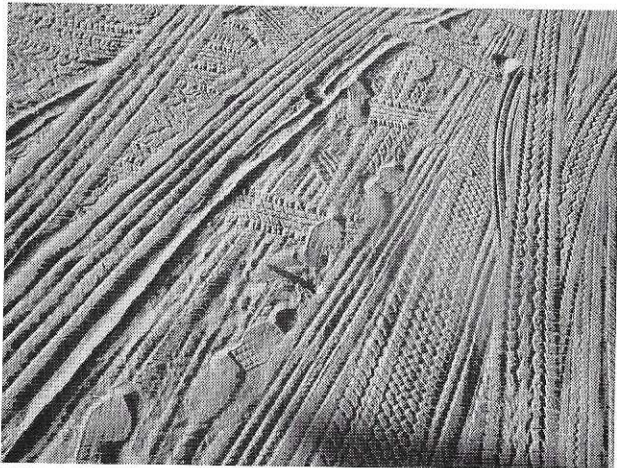
J.R. Sharp

As I walked along my path
I came across a man who gave to me
But little, I no longer poor, but not rich
And he only slightly less rich for the giving.

Then I came across a man who took from me
But little, and left me to go on my way
Poorer than I had been, but still ...

Than I came across a man who gave to me all
And left himself with nothing, I now rich,
He now poor.
And so he asked that I carry him along the path.

Than I came across a man who took from me all,
Leaving me nothing but another poor man
Upon my back, not to be carried,
To end my journey along the path.



Was I Coming or Going?

Jaqueline N. Lasher



Soledad

Luis Armendariz

Children of Guillen

Norma L. Chavez

Lice infested smiling faces;
Housing projects out of water,
plumbing broken once again.

Hungry bloated little bellies,
How can they expect to reason!

NO! NO! NO! NO!
How can they learn!

Playing right beside drug dealers,
The abusers, and drive-by shooters.
This scenario visually present,
more pronounced than the ice cream
vendor.

Stifling poverty is reality for
The **Children of Guillen**.
Fragile, wounded, little children
Need to save them from despair.

Must not let unused minds fester.
Can't allow it! Can't allow it!
Can't allow decay and rot.

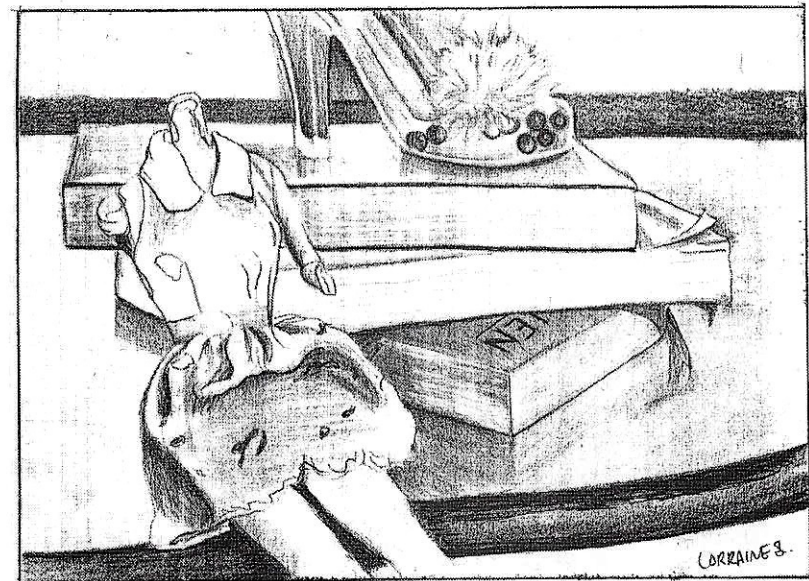
Climate not so warm and fuzzy.
Strive to better their conditions.
They can all be high achievers, but
if only given that one chance.

All believers making changes,
working towards that dream of gold.
Children of Guillen please rise,

fill the void and hollow mishap.

You are made of strength and courage!
Keep on going — walk the journey!
Don't look back, but towards your future.

Welcome to the arms of spirits,
Voices of the old ancestors,
Voices stronger than the violence,
Voices stronger than the fear.



Barbie Doll Syndrome

Lorraine Salazar

Conflicted

Mary Shaner

Glasses thud on the table
As silverware tinkles in the silence.
How can this room feel both dense and empty,
As if all the oxygen has been extracted?

Heels tap across the frigid floor,
Each step echoed in the wake of another.
Dishes shatter in the sink, unclean,
Broken fragments waiting to slice, destroy.

It's a strange melody,
The disconnection of everything.
It's the feeling of fingers shaking,
Temples pulsing, the notion of knowing
Everything you need is somehow
Wrapped up, twisted in yesterday.

Mascara lines are slowly dripping,
Like static washing over a song.
The dream rests in tomorrow,
Praying that one day all will be resolved.

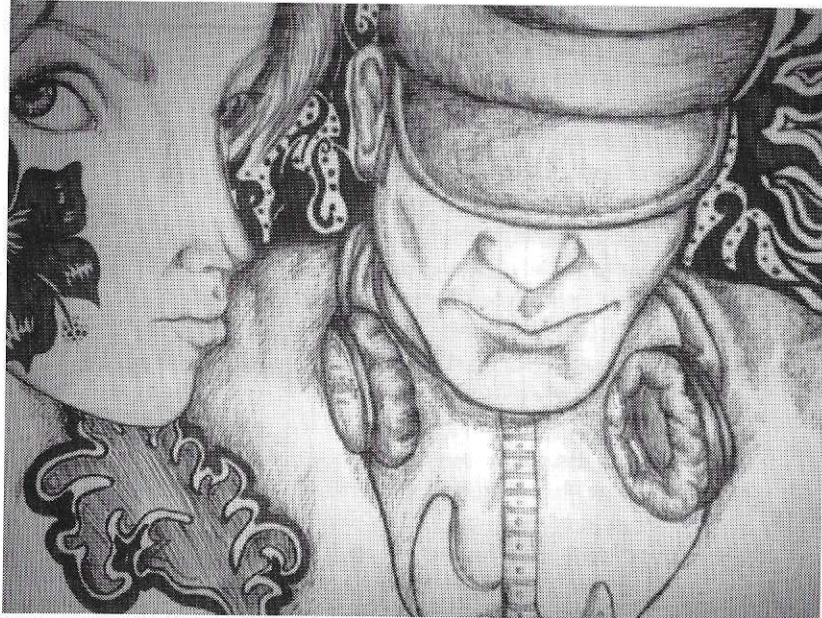


Jose A. Blanco

Letty's Counseling Service

Cassie Galvan

I would rather go serve her
Lord;
the harbor I cherish, the
one who surgically
removes the mute button
I shove down my throat
during a weak episode.
She doesn't allow me
to invite depression over
for a cup of tea and biscuits.
She wants to hear the free,
sacred sound I project, every
movement of my artistic
forms, all the growth I will
accomplish in this life time.
She reads the simple everyday
words I write in my various
sized journals.
She writes the importance
of my troubles on a note pad.
She does not judge me, or
spit at my chemical imbalance
that pulls my hand to where
black holes were first born.
During my process of
when I have to go back to
square one she is there
guiding me in my time of
misery. In my frustrations,
disappointments she is patient,
still proud when I hop scotch
all over again.
Her vibrant couches never leave me Lord, like you do.



Monica de la Torre

Liar

Jackie Ramirez

Handsome and attractive he is,
admirable from every angle,
so beautiful he walks,
I humble myself to him,
a stranger I know nothing of,
a stranger without flaws in the presence of my sight,
his touch so delicate and chilling,

"Liar"

his face so sincere,
his nose, his lips, wait....,
his eyes, the look of deception,
he hides behind a veil,
so thin and obscure,
his voice muffled,
he speaks of love and commitment,
the way he reads a book without pages,
his words mere taste to the truth,
he twists and turns as I whisper,

"Liar"

a man who belongs to his bride,
cheats to cheat my love,
for his hunger is greater than love,
how blind and naïve I am,
a stranger without flaws in the presence of my sight,
deceived by my lie,
I am the liar,

"Liar."

The Shadow that cannot be seen upon

Omar Santos

Cannot see your reflection, your image, only senses of present surrounding
body and soul.

Afraid of whatever you are, saying to myself, why do you keep following
me?

But every time I walk into darkness, you surround me like a shield.

A pleasant sense of feeling, not knowing what it is always upon.

Why are you always upon me? Who are you? What are you?

Don't have the answers of who you are

Only a shadow that I feel what you are.



Aida E. Gonzalez

When I Die

Rafael Melendez

When I die- give me six jackals from my
pall bearers

And let them sign corridas of my life
As I remembered it.

Adorn my casket with lays of
prickly pear flowers.

With tunas red-filled with
a sweetness

That in life I never tasted

Then let chaste nuns, who never did, sing to me

A capella- that I might remember my own
Virginity of the soul

When I die lay me facing up
so I can view my last sun set
filled with God's pallet of colors
Like the first one God made

When I die let the jackals lament my passing
and feed my ignorance to them
For when I pass I will go where
it will not be hot and humid
and perspiration will not
flow from me

One last thing- por favor.
Cover my eyes with gold doubloons
for grave robbers to find
so I can unburden myself of fortunes
That I never spent.

For when I die-
in the end it does not matter.

Just another day...

Leslie Council

I've been through
groggy, sleep, caffeine sucking
Monday morning traffic
half-way there, only to
get red lights the rest of the way
Tuesday 5-min late traffic
just another day to get through
stop for doughnuts- go on green lights
Wednesday, hump day traffic
thirsty, but running late
hungry but burnt toast
got to get a move on
Thursday traffic
piled bumper to bumper
let's keep the line going
blinker arrow flashing, flag men waving
and football jersey newspaper vendor
Friday please don't crash into me traffic

I've been through
got to get to the next garage sale
before dawn, while the rest of El Paso
sleeps off their party favors
Saturday morning in the Bronco traffic
and the game hasn't started yet
so let's tailgate till it does
Saturday night traffic
mi mama's novella is starting so hurry
everyone stuffed like penguins
still stiff for redemption
in their
Sunday best traffic

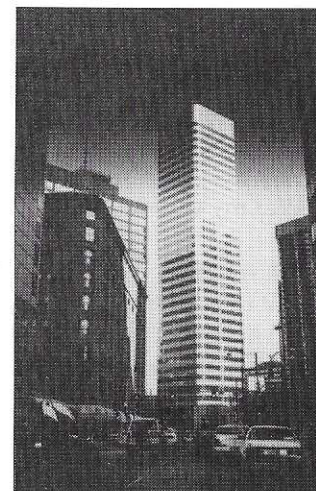
And any day of the week
the stop-n-go, speeding 5 miles over

the limit flow
or get plowed by yellow license plates
stopped for outdated stickers
blew out a tire, covered new dress in black grease
wind blown hair and smeared lipstick
Kind of traffic...

bump-d-bump, blinkity blink
yellow school zone traffic
cars flashing lights on opposite sides
of the street because you're speeding
cop's ahead kind of comrade traffic
slow ooze of a crash cuz
someone was speeding, or had too much booze
staring out the window at
all the pretty lights kind of traffic...

whew I'm home and the car
is rolling out of the driveway
cuz it's still roaring to go
Kind of traffic...
8 lanes on hwy I-10 to loop 610
curb off at I-75
going 30 on overpasses my skyscrapers
with sun in your eyes taking photos
then sliding underpasses filled with
16 feet of water kind of traffic

Everyone halt on the freeway
behind the officer following the dog
kind of traffic
and all I've determined is the
only traffic I like is...
the get the hell out of my way
I'm stopping at McDonald's
for ice cream kind of traffic.



Enzo Baez

Aroma

Judy Isabel Parra

Dove shampoo smells fresh and clean
It cleanses the hair of dirt and sweat
Its lather is rich and rinses clean,
Leaving no residue.

Dove conditioner feels light too,
But the scent reminds me of the time in Florence,
No not Italy, but the backwards back woods of Alabama.

Remembering when we walked hand in hand
Into the Dollar General, all redneck eyes on us;
No Dove could ever wash the stench of racism off them.

We bought the Dove and other toiletries while we
Stayed at the Motel 8, and showering with you
Was my favorite thing to do.

but you must have scrubbed a bit too hard
that last day, washing your love for me right off for good,
never having the guts to say so until months later, though your
Silence spoke volumes.

Not too much time passed when I bought some Dove
Without thinking.
I used it one morning and wept well into the evening,
those olfactory senses never forgetting that pain-filled break-up.

Though I do not use Dove anymore,
I think perhaps I should;
The wound you gave me has sealed and healed
and I don't believe the soap would sting anymore.

For Dove's endurance equals my inner strength,
And so my love, you did not break me
I still have faith in love and Doves are just pleasant
Reminders that my mistakes and heartache for you
Mean something a little more than
Simply sorrow-

This woman's strength is mighty yet,
And more fragrant
than ever
So take a whiff of that
You coward.

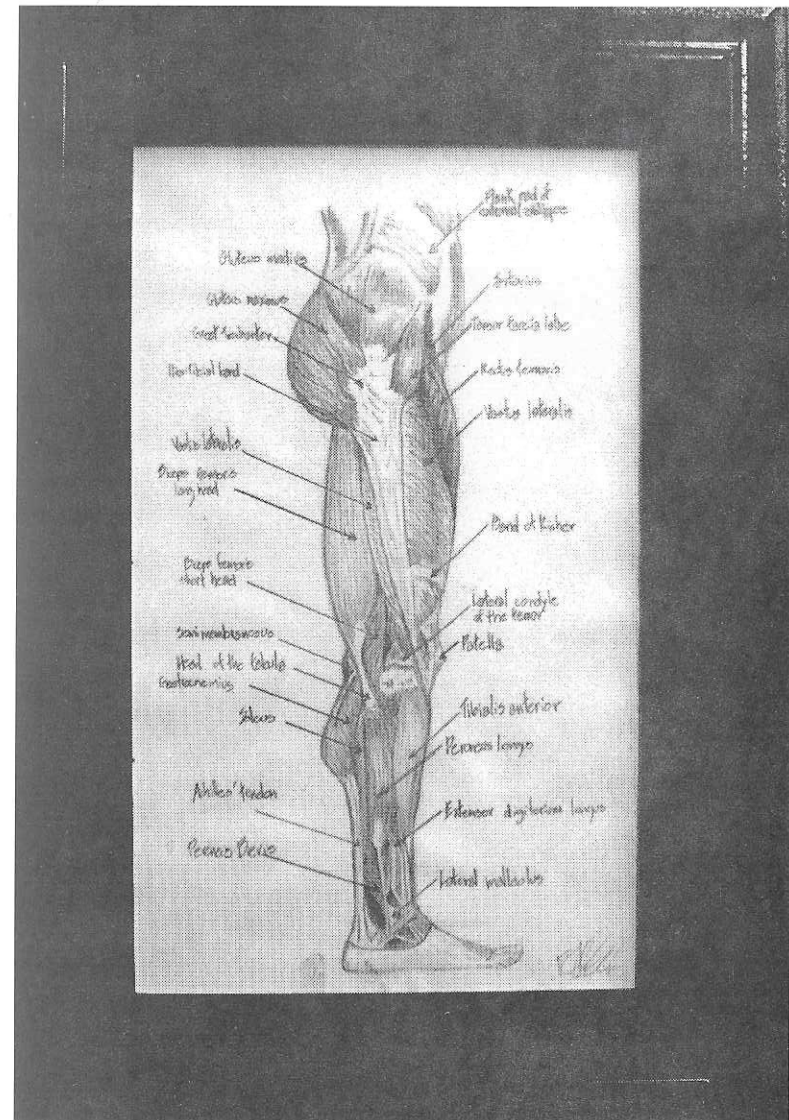
Sadness Blooms

Andrew Mammei

Sadness blooms like a flower, untreated and unchecked causes cries of sorrows amongst the trees of sadness. When the depths of dreams flow like blood from the tainted knife, Tears of pain rain to the floor between black stained hands, as thuds of loud taps hang just out of reach of lucid thoughts, while worried gasps for life eternal escape the throat in gurgling pops that plead for help on defend ears, While the sadness comes to its full blossom with drips of rivers red as the night streaming from its pure petals of mortal sin, Flows into the bottles of simple wines that drug the masses, The end of sadness comes from the topping off of the simple wine as the flower of sadness seems to sadness comes from the topping off of the simple wine as the flower of sadness seems to shrink within as the streams of red seem to flow no more dripping now like little drops of new fallen rain before ending into a slump with movement stilled the ground now dried and red stained with life no more.

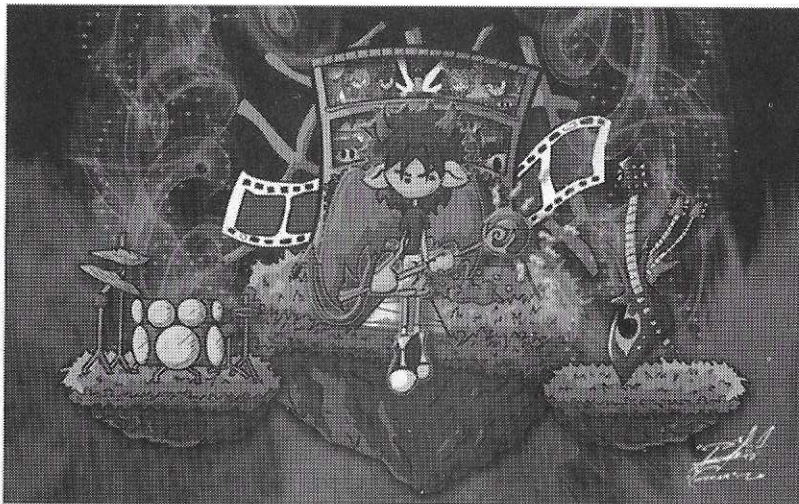


Zaira Xitlalitl Aguilar



Leg

Eduardo Uranga Sen



Self Portrait

Roberto V. Alatriz

One Hour Photo

Lydia Arenas

Ten hours a day spent diligently cutting lives.

"Crimson and clover, over and over"

And how he betrothed her.

Say Cheese! (but don't eat it.)

Leave some for the rest.

"I'll send an S.O.S to the world.

I hope that someone gets my

Message in a bottle..."

"But everybody's working in the weekends."

Not me, though.

I'm just having fun.

Nice, being the dealer of this game.

You made the rules,

But remember to play it fair, boys.

"Life's not fair."

At least that's what the lady across the street said.

Two boys \$16.14.

I meant 16 and 14.

The 16 drowned and you better be careful cause she's counting on a nice one.

Water's almost gone.

Thanks a lot party-hardies, nudies, and newbies!

Life's a paper with colors on it.

Who knows how many colors it must take to make a memory.

Don't ask me though. I just trade them...

How do you like them grills and road kill?

**Paloma Negra
-a ranchera**

Carolina Monsivais

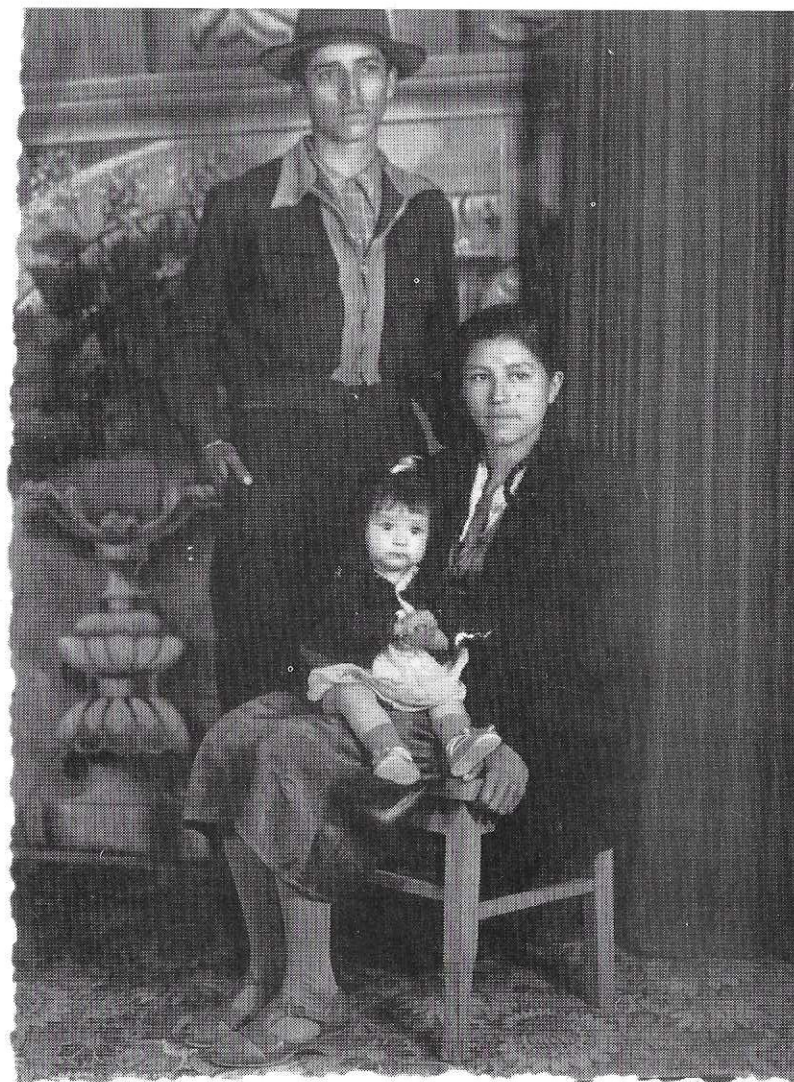
Surrounded by familia and friends'
voices black feathers gathered around
ribs cascade down. Darkness slips

into dawn, I remember the women,
as they were about to read their stories,
declare years of marriage

as if they were a sentence served
—15 years, 13 years, 22 years, 33 years—
They survived the sound of wings and

skies blurred by black feathers once
gathered around ribs. They waited
for him to change. And finally I

understood even though I'd said it
in countless speeches, how one
can still love what they wish would
never return.

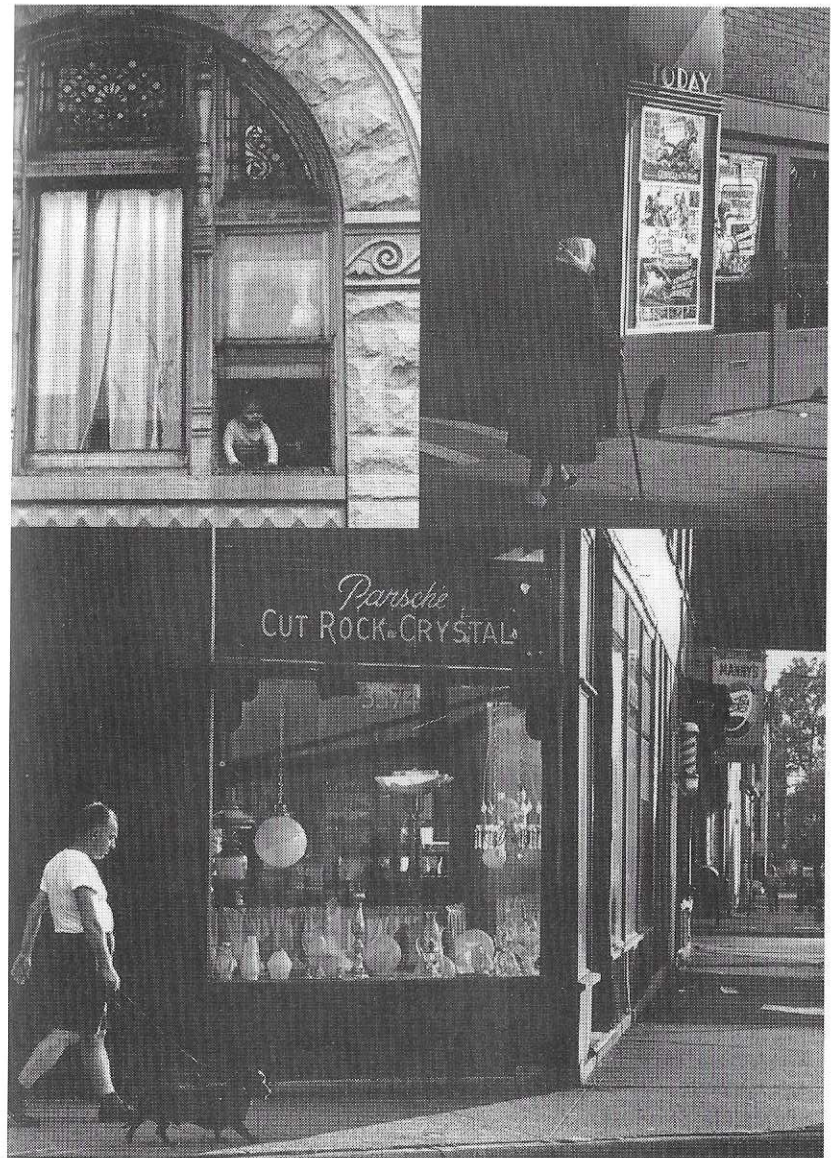
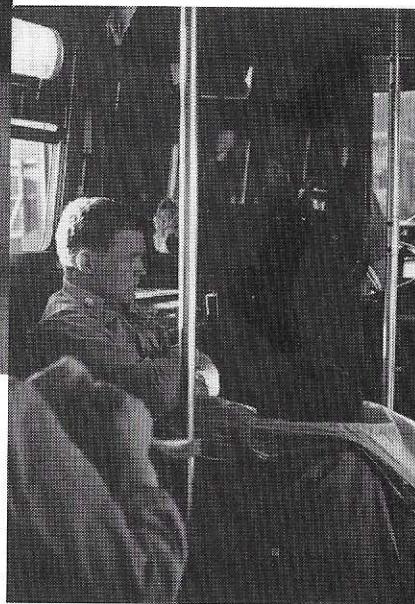


"1945" Micaela

Mary T. M. Ojeda

Urban Landscape - Chicago

Roxanne Schroeder



Dimming the Lights to a Sunday

Sandra Padilla

Scrubbing hello off the plates
Rinsing goodbye from the edges
Drying regret off the ends.

Dimming the Lights to a Sunday

Turning down echoes in hallways
Sweeping the minutes from doorsteps
Hanging up laughter in closets.

Dimming the lights to a Sunday

Soaking in memory suds
Rubbing with calm resignation
Tucking in dreams for the wake.

Dimmed are the lights to this Sunday.



Denise Rios

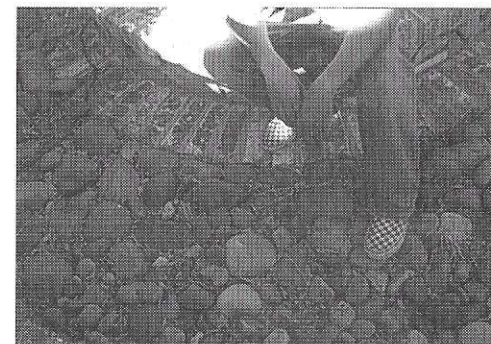
Written in Stone

Carla Newman

What I once hated I now long for,
endless hours of trudging through sand
dunes spiked with mesquite bushes,
stepping carefully, my boots watching
for snakes who are also watching
for my boots, the heat melting
my sunscreen into a buttery glaze,
sand frosting my baking form.

The thrill of eyes discovering artifacts
where moments earlier there were just rocks, of
feet retracing ancient highways that
vanished in the shifting sands, of
hands uncovering hearths—earth ovens—fires
long cold—that tempered the fruits of this land.

Ah! To be alive and know it,
feel it in every tired sinew,
longing for rest but not allowing
myself to stop lest I miss one
crucial piece of information.
Each stone has a story to tell.



Zaira Xitlalitl
Aguilar

Like Odysseus

Ruth Peña

Hurling through life's intersections,
one step ahead of the white rabbit, who snaps
at your tailgate, coughing up fumes
from your speeding Mitsubishi,
grip the wheel firmly, steer a straight course,
and don't let his stopwatch catch you
before you've run your intended course.

Beware the six-headed Scylla of Pride
And her six different versions of reality,
meant to confuse and disorient you.
At the edge of Charybdis, vortex of pity,
for a minute have compassion, sign the cross;
then floor the gas peddle and don't get sucked under.
Turn up your IPOD, drown out the Sirens,
before they turn you into a pig.

Hold fast to the divinity of your innocence,
even under the power of your racing manhood.
Steer clear of clinging, clawing hands that drag,
and speed away from the X-Box Lotus blossom,
that siphons your will to live,
enslaves you with lethargic satisfaction.

But, like Odysseus, approach the Underworld
with reverence and courage,
swing your sword above the heads of the undeserving,
allow only the loving Shades of your youth
to drink a drop of sacrificial blood
for a minute's worth of Real Time.

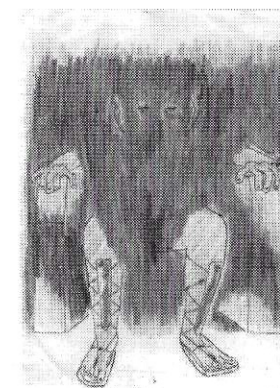
They have something to say,
Tattoo it on your brain.

They've only two conditions:
Make friends with the rabbit who never lets up—
And don't look back at the smoke and ashes.
Never look back.

The Chair

Keith E. Mallard, Jr.

Here he lies within his chair,
Suspended in utter darkness;
A life as you call it —
A Millennia of eternal bliss
For a once light entity turned dark,
Once known as the Lightbringer to all,
Now reduced to a dim structure of his being.
Call him Satan, Devil, Snake;
To others, he is known as Lucifer.
Many claim to have seen him;
Many claim to have heard him;
Many more claim to have been him,
But how can that be
When all along, he has sat
In his chair, his cold throne,
Bound down by his own pride.
He waits now, ever patiently
Till his time is up, and he can rise
Rise from his chair and step back into His graces,
But first he must wait in this chair
This cold throne which cools his deepest flame
And shuns his brightest light.
This chair, he will remain in
For now...



Keith E. Mallard, Jr

Look for the Hand of God, Brother Immigrant

Francisco Espinoza

Look for the hand of God
because you will need it
in the course of your journey;
toward any place to go.

Leaving your hometown for the city
your town full of hopes and wisdom.
Where we leave the old folks sad and desolate;
with tears in their eyes, knowing you will depart.

The city might receive you, with a warm welcome
but if it doesn't, you will need God's hand
who will put you on the right path in a city of concrete.

To leave your town for the city
your town full of fertile fields and hills.
the farms and the cattle of which only
your hand need to stretch, to take what God gives you.

In reality, you need God's hand
to guard against the fields of asphalt,
and arid desert, without water or fruits on the hills;
fields with trash that the wind takes and pollute your walking.

To leave your town, full of fruits and fresh vegetables they're
bathed with the purity of clear brush
that begins in the mountains, the trees natural purifies that move
like dancing a waltz

You will really need God's hand
as you arrive at the city and smell the fetid
pollution resulting from the daily bad purification.
As you touch the fruit, you will see the rotting
of our ugly behavior.

In the end, it is your decision to stay in the city or go back to your town.

Watermark:
Louis H. Valles

Brother to Brother

David Hernandez

Well, brother, I tell you:
Learning to write perfectly ain't been no walk in the park.
It's had cracks and lumps along its path,

And harsh winds blowing from every direction,
And rain pouring like a shower,
And thunder and lightning clashing together—

Awful, just awful.
But all the time I've been checking my work,
And reading it over and over just to see if it's right,

And sometimes I would ask professionals for assistance.
So, brother, don't you be afraid of this path.
Don't you be afraid of expressing yourself,

Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you stop in the middle of this path now—
For I'm still moving in this path, brother,

I'm still following my goals.
And learning to write perfectly ain't been no walk in the park.



Ray
Casillas

From Me to Mia

Valerie A. Rodriguez

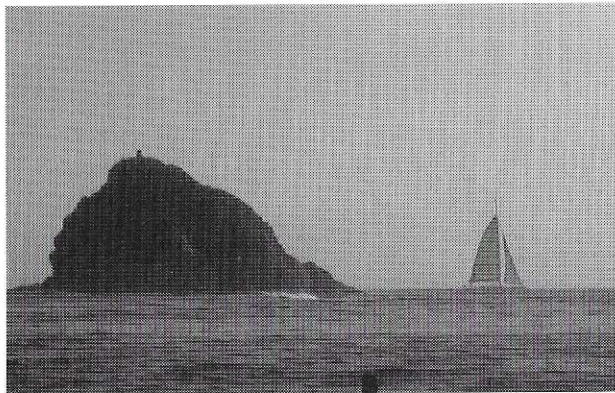
Well Mia, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been no
Caribbean cruise.
It's had thunderstorms,

And thunderstorms,
And heavy winds,
And stomach aches- nauseating.
But all the time I've been trying to have fun,

And sunbathing,
And snorkeling,
And sometimes taking a late night walk on deck.
So Mia, Don't you whine.

Don't you cry,
'Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you stop wagging your tail now-
For I'm still having fun, Mia,

I'm still enjoying life.
And learning to read for me ain't been no Caribbean cruise.



Denise
Rios

Mother to Daughter

Jennifer Ramirez

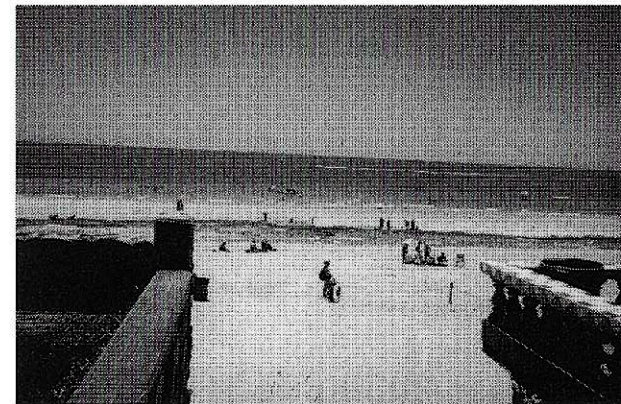
Well, daughter, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been no paradise island.
It's had stormy days,

And rough seas,
And pounding rain,
And fast winds –
Pandemonium.

But all the time I've been surfing the waves,
Sailing a boat,
And building sand castles,
And sometimes swimming against the tide.

So daughter, don't you quit rowing,
Don't you stop swimming,
Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you jump ship now –

For I'm still treading water, daughter,
I'm still paddling my canoe.
And learning to read for me ain't been no paradise island.



Vera
Araiza

Mother to Daughter

Jessica Blanco

Well, baby girl, I'll tell you:

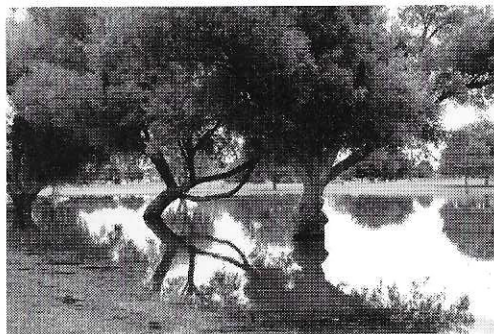
Learning to read for me ain't been no
Glowing summer day in the park,
It's had black clouds over head,
And petulant noise,
And veil of litter,
Repulsive.

But all the time I've been relaxing under an old tree,
And staring at the sunrays peak through the leaves and branches,
And feeling the supple grass between my fingers,
And sometimes in the silence I could see the color of words
Around me.

So baby girl, don't you stop.
Don't you cease your dreams,
'cause you find it's kind of hard.

For I'm still finding the words, baby girl,
I'm still a pursuer.

And learning to read for me ain't been no glowing summer day
In the park.



Ray Casillas

The Picnic

Selene Soria

Well, Michelle, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been no Picnic.

It's had trash,
And ants,
And dirty water,

And flies –
Disgusting.
But all the time I've been playing,

And laughing,
And having fun,
And sometimes walking.

So Michelle, don't you drop the ball.
Don't you throw in the towel?
'Cause you find it's kind of hard.

Don't you lose the race now –
For I'm still dreaming, Michelle
I'm still enjoying.

And learning to read for me ain't been no picnic.

Mom to Chloe

Michele Pedroza

Well, Chloe, I'll tell you:
Learning to read from me ain't no
Ride through the country air.
It's had it's moments of city pollution,
And black clouds of dust from factories,
And the exhaust reaping from the pipes of vehicles,
And the mounds of trash that fill the landfills —
Tainted.
But all this time I've been fighting to help keep it clean,
And using clean gas,
And recycling trash,
And sometimes carpooling when needed.
So Chloe, don't you stop fighting.
Don't you want to throw your hands in the air and yell stop
'Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you feel your lungs closing up now —
For I'm still looking for other people to fight with me, Chloe,
I'm still gonna help with Global Warming.
And learning to read from me ain't been no ride through the country air.

Mother

Irene Nuñez

Now I realize that my suffering was your suffering.
Now I realize that my happiness was your happiness.
Now I realize that my worries were your worries.
Now I realize that my stubbornness was your desperation.
Now I realize that you always knew what was on my mind.
Now I realize that your love is not comparable to any other love.
Now I realize that you satisfied my needs and wants.
Now I realize that my love for you is eternal and divine.
As a present I would give you the stars and the moon, except
The sun because you are my sun.

You are so special, Mama

Roberta A. Rodriguez

When I was little you gave me
Care, security, happiness
Homemade cookies at Christmas
Pies for Thanksgiving
Cake for birthdays & presents too
My first roller skates and
My first baby doll with curls

As I grew up you gave me
Comfort, laughter, smiles
Lots of happiness
The soft touch of your hugs
Best Italian food ever
And your prayers

Then your first great-grandchild came along
You gave us support, encouragement
Hugs & kisses for him & I
He changed your name to MAMA
Never thought you'd see him grow
Into the man he is now

You are a woman ahead of your times
With such wisdom about life
The softness of your voice
The skill of sitting and talking
Never interfering, just suggesting

Your faith in the Lord is so strong
I know you have a direct line
Without your prayers, I may not have survived
Your strength held us together
But most of all, the LOVE
You gave us, will be cherished forever.

Fifty Years Together

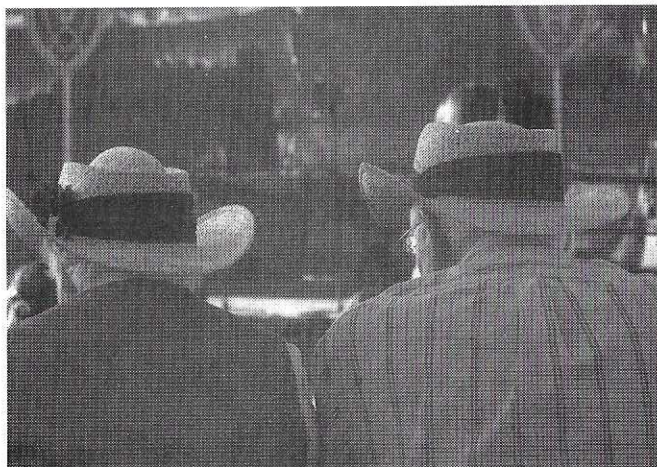
Ruth M. Wren

We didn't have a fancy wedding,
my dress was blue, not white.
We were married by a Baptist preacher,
late on a Saturday night.

We didn't even have an apartment,
Bob's room was a place to stay.
We didn't have a honeymoon either;
we both had to work the next day.

We hardly knew each other
just twenty-seven days in fact.
My parents didn't like him,
but still we formed our pact.

We vowed to love each other
and that is what we've done.
We've had our days of sorrow
but we've had years of fun.



True Love
Jacqueline
N. Lasher

Chrysalis is proud to showcase works from area elementary, middle, and high school students, including those from Mission Early College High School, Lydia Patterson Institute, Picacho Middle School, Burges High School, Montwood High School, St. Patrick's Cathedral School, and Vista Hills Elementary.

Omniscience

Eddie Rosales

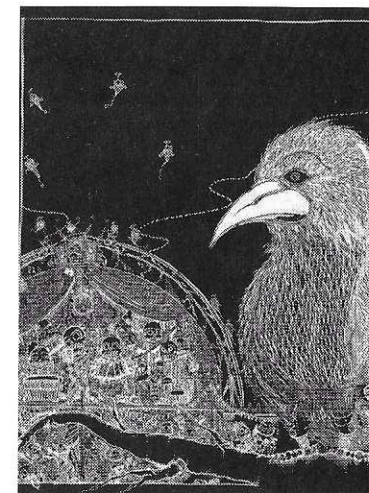
I am as omniscient as any one else's omniscience
I wonder what's behind fake smiles
I hear stupid lies and vicious rumors
I see how cruel society can be
I want to be somebody else

I am as omniscient as anyone else
I pretend not to care what people think about me
I feel like breaking down
I touch the ground with my feet
I fear being out of place

I am as omniscient as anyone else
I understand that life is unfair
I say things I don't mean sometimes
I dream that people can all be friends
regardless of who they are
I try to be someone I'm not
I hope that one day people won't have
to place labels on others just
because they're different

I am as omniscient as anyone else

By the Barrel
Jesus Aguilera



Te Prometo

Guido Armendáriz

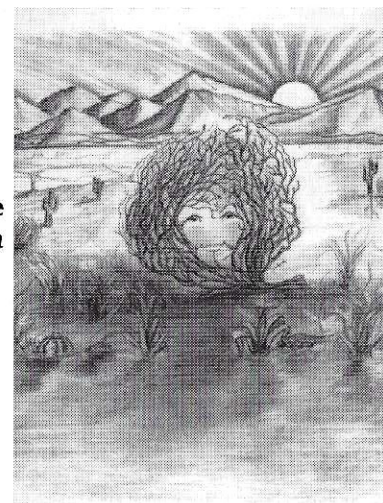
En tu momento de tormento estuve,
en tiempos de olvido te recordé,
en días oscuros conseguí la manera de que pudieras ver,
en colapsos de dolor fui tu refugio.
El camino por el que andaban nuestros pies se separó.
Tu alma y la mía se consumieron.
La tuya se fue a un lugar donde el aire es coro de Ángeles.
La mía a un lugar donde el sol no es más que oscuridad
y sus pobladores son sujetos con títulos profesionales de cobardes.
Te doy mi última palabra de esperanza.

Verás a tu alma llorar
por no haber conseguido todo lo que era su anhelo,
cuando se vayan al olvido del mar.
Podrás acurrucarte aquí junto a mi,
todo con amor y perdón.
Estaré en las buenas y en las malas junto a ti.
Porque nuestro amor es verdadero,
del que se puede sacar un pétalo de afecto,
de un lugar de olvido que es el rincón de su camino.
Será fiel mi promesa,
y será el lugar donde pase y corra
se pondrá en camino de cuidado.

Y cuando el peligro se ponga de pie frente a ella,
se quedará tiesa,
y huirá del mal que está ante ella.
Mi promesa regresará con triunfo del mas allá.
Regresará contigo a su izquierda y yo a su diestra.
Tanto fue el amor que pudo viajar tras esa línea de olvido,
donde de un lugar salen bendiciones
y de otro maldiciones.

Ahora sabes mi promesa,
La que con cordura y firmeza
Se arrulla al oír de tu coro en la noche.
Y el aurora de sangre nos bañará y seremos puros y limpios.
Seremos de carne y hueso otra vez.
Viviendo en paz, seremos de nuevo hombres.

God Is Love
Mary T. M. Ojeda



Song to Dreamers

Olivia Silvas

Dreamers chasing their ambitions
writing in their journals
wanting to be better
wishing they could prosper
Dreamers living on a soft cloud
full of inspiration
looking for a way out
caught in reality
All the dreamers trapped in a fantasy

Color Essence

Karla Jimenez

H is green

Short, neat, perfectly mown grass that can't be stepped on but will
An envelope protecting a special card that matches its guardian
A dress hanging in the closet that was used only once at a
quinceañera but contains countless memories of that night

J is purple

Ink on paper, from the same colored pen, that expresses people's
thoughts
A small, scruffy, but still useful sports bag
A striped shirt worn on the last day of freshman year

L is orange

A bright, round, setting sun that doesn't hurt your eyes, but instead
invites you to look straight at it
A stadium jam-packed with fans chanting the names of their favorite
artists at an unforgettable concert
A smiling pumpkin with triangle-shaped eyes, bursting with sweets

Q is pink

The blushing cheeks of an embarrassed person
The soft, fluffy material on the edges of a round mirror reflecting a
bedroom
A backpack half-full of books, notebooks, homeworks, and other
random, forgotten things

B is red

A uniform shirt folded up so it appears to be tucked in
Blood red but super shiny nail polish decorating long, well-kept nails
The color on two different countries' flags that together symbolize the
identity of many people.

La Isla Del Encanto

Ranielle L. Espinoza

Today I am 5 years old; I have just experienced a bumpy ride with turns, and dips that have upset my stomach and terrified my diminutive mind. I'm holding my mother's soft, white, smooth hand tightly as I get off the plane. I look up at the dark blue sky filled with millions of bright, shining, sparkling stars and wonder where we are at. My question is answered by the greetings of my great grandmother, by grabbing my two cheeks with her delicate hands and a soft kiss is placed on my cheek. The warmth from her hands made me feel protected, with no worries to where I am. I look around the darkness and hear the million sounds of the coquis, croaking in the green, moist bushes hiding, jumping, and passing from mankind. I sit inside the green eclipse, surrounded by talkative family members. Happiness is evolving inside the vehicle bringing a smile to my mother's face; I know we are in Puerto Rico.

Today I am 15 years old; I can see the fresh, greenness of the tropical rain forest spreading infinitely over the mountainous, hills filled with wondrous creatures as I hold the rusted metal gate with my soft hands. I spot lizards squirming, pacing, and speeding through the floors of my great grandmother's little house. The sudden fresh smell of rain, pouring heavily over the rooftops, made out of metal and cement, instantly disappearing within 10 minutes. Then, I ride in the car with my window open, letting the breeze brush against my face, and letting the sound of nature crawl into my ears. I arrive at Luquillo Beach with a smile across my face and dash to the sparkling water and I let myself lay still. I feel the clear, blue waves pounding against my body, pulling me back to the shore. I can see the clear, black-eyed fishes swimming along my side with every stroke I make. The beauty of the island makes me feel at ease, and welcomes me to my home, Puerto Rico.

Today I am 25 years old; I'm walking down the aisle with my hand wrapped tightly around my father's arm. I meet the eyes of my soon to be husband and repeat the words that are flowing out of the priest's mouth. My long white wedding dress is mildly, waving in the air as the fresh breeze blows around our family members. I hear the ocean waves pounding like as my heart is at the moment I say "I do." The ring slides through my hand and sits perfectly still in my ring finger. We both run together holding our hands towards the open ocean water, I raise up slowly my white dress

and let the ocean sand sink in my bare feet and turn towards my husband, and say "I'm Happy" to him with a wide smile and let myself rest in his arms. Puerto Rico is where I want to be happily married to the love of my life, with whoever will fill in that application.

The Attack

Monica Flores

Watermark: John Paul Seigel

I am 5 years old and frightened of the hospital. Feeling sick and with nausea, my doctor tells me I have asthma. I don't know what to feel, my heart is pounding so fast it has no beat. Dreaming daily did doses decrease. My mom tells me not to worry, that everything is going to get better. Then I see my dad come in with a big teddy bear in one hand and in the other a huge flower bouquet. They make me so happy I start to cry and beg to go home, but it seems impossible for I have to stay a month. The month has finished, and I get home feeling manipulated by the medicine. When I go into my room, I noticed that my teddy bears were gone and all there was was a big window looking at me that covered most of the wall. I asked my mom what had happened and where was my stuff and when she told me I started to cry. She said all my stuff was given away because it harmed me and I always had to keep my window open for the fresh air to come in.

I am 13 years old and calm awaiting the results. I had just recently had an asthma attack, but so strong I almost got in a coma state. Getting hypnotized by the blue wall, I hear my parents and the doctor talking about me, saying it could get poorer. Symptoms are getting worse and might be at the risk of dying. My cousins visit me and all along the night we play games and tell horror stories. I had to say that when they are around I feel stronger than ever and more when they tell me that they love me. My boyfriend stayed there every day after school and taught me what he had learned that day. I was so grateful with him for doing with that because I had been a dedicated student since I started school and I learned in the hospital was the most amazing thing.

I am 29 years old losing my faith. My heart pounding more than 165 beats per minute, the doctor tells me to hold on. I hear my children crying in the distance and yelling, begging for me not to go away, to be strong. For a moment I start praying, but then I see a white light coming but I tell it to go away. My eyes open, and I see the doctor giving me shocks and yelling to the nurses I have come back to Earth. Tears cry out of my eyes

and I tell myself, "You did it again". After a couple of hours, my children come in the room and give me a hug and screaming to me they love me. The specialist comes in and tells me I have no more than six months of life. He tells me that the asthma attacks have become so strong that they have killed a part of my brain. Aggravated by the news, I tell my children and husband, which news almost killed them.



Deve Cadena

All You Teens

Alejandra Ramirez

All you teens texting with your friends in class
 All you teens shopping at the crowded mall
 All you teens fixing yourself in the mirror
 All you teens at the movies with your date
 All you teens cheering at the football games
 All you teens gossiping in the hallways
 All you teens partying in the weekends
 All you teens chatting in the computer
 All you teens talking on the phone at night
 All you teens playing soccer at the park
 All you teens showing off your new brand cars
 All you teens sipping coffee at Starbucks
 All you teens confused about your own life
 All you teens wanting your problems to flee

Walking Illusion

Joshua Gonzales

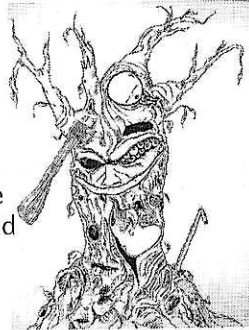
When the world is up, and seems to be gleaming
I find everyone around me still to be dreaming.
Not awake yet to truly see the way everything is and shouldn't be.
I seem to be burdened with never sleeping
Fear that I will be taken and hear those people weeping,
They may never awaken and may remain
Always blinded to carry that thorn in their mind to wherever they may
confide it
Seeming that life always reveals to be double sided.
We walk asleep not aware, not certain, but certainly not awake.

The Reaper

Zaira Akhtar

Illustration: Jesus Aguilera

The reaper comes
Closer and closer
Takes my lifeless body
We fall into hell
As I fell my tears turn to ice
Until my body hits the ground
There is no sound
I turn blue and violet
No longer violent
I'm finally dead



My eyes closed and nothing is ever said

I do not suffer anymore

Emptiness was such a sore

As I decay, my last spark sees god and Satan

Laughing at the world and watch it coil.

To think of good and evil together in turmoil

Sin is what we have to live for and virtues are what we have to die for.

To see our messiahs in chains

And prophets in cages

Rotting to nothing over the ages

The Shower Curtain Man, and Other True Tale's From the Summer of '07

Zachary Little

My otherwise perpetually monotonous summer of which I've had so many was broken up this year by a road trip with my mother to Los Angeles and San Diego. I'd been to L.A. once before, and San Diego twice before, but it had been a couple of years, so I was still nervously excited. It was a twelve hour drive to my favorite state, and when we arrived, we fell asleep immediately at the hotel. But many a great, and sometimes odd things were to happen soon enough.

The hotel we stayed at was in L.A. for the first week, and we had to drive to Anaheim to see Disneyland. Well, we called for directions to find out what street to look for. The street we needed was Harbor Boulevard. Once we found Harbor Boulevard, we traveled south on it for a few miles, after determining we had gone too far down, we turned around, and headed the other direction an Harbor Boulevard. Eventually, we got lost. We called again for directions. The conversation was as follows:

"Hello, I'm on Harbor Boulevard, and I'm trying to get to Disneyland, but I can't seem to find you, I'm on Harbor Boulevard, but I'm having no luck," said my mother.

"Well," said the Disneyland clerk. "What part of Harbor Boulevard are you on?"

"Well, I'm not sure, there's a place called Orange Fair Mall nearby, if that's any help."

"Oh, it sounds like your in Fullerton, you need to be in Anaheim, you see you're on the right street, just not in the right city."

Well, we eventually made it to Disneyland, but needless to say, we decided to take the bus from that day on. At least that way, we wouldn't be lost, and someone else could drive through traffic.

The next day, there was a heavy rain shower and we had to run to the bus stop, seeking shelter under its plexiglas roof. We hoped desperately that the rain would stop soon, so as not to ruin our Disneyland adventure, we even contemplated not going, but just retreating back to the hotel. Should we go? Should we stay, should we hope for the best, or expect the worst. While we thought over our afternoon plans, and gazed up at the sky for any sign of hope, a slight breeze carried the oddly familiar sound rustling fabric from behind me. I glanced over my shoulder, and saw nothing but

small shrubs; I thought the sound was nothing more than a rabbit, perhaps jumping in leaves. A few moments later I heard a similar ruffle, and I turned around, I saw a man, around his late twenties to early thirties, laying behind the shrub where I had not seen a man a moment ago. He was dressed in merely a pair of green rubber gloves, bunny slippers, which added an ironic twist, plaid boxers, and the great center piece, a large, pink, rubber shower curtain, worn over his shoulders, cape style. In a moment I felt a powerful impulse to laugh, a sympathetic heart felt agony, and deep anger at society, all at once. It was enough to make one nauseous. The man stood up, he was tall, around six-foot-three, and he had blonde, scraggly hair, twigs in it. He stood up, and sat down next to my mother. He smiled inquisitively, and I saw, remarkably, that not only did he have all his teeth, but they were pearly white, in better condition than my own. Both my mother and I assumed he would ask for money, and both of us reached for our wallets, but he didn't ask for money, he asked something entirely different.

"Excuse me miss, but is this young man, your son, or your brother?" shower curtain man asked.

"He's my son, why?"

"Wow, I wouldn't put you a day over twenty-eight." I looked at my mom, and it was like seeing her in Technicolor for some reason. The rain had caused her hair to curl into loops the way it naturally did when it got wet.

"Well thank you very much." My mom was flattered and scared all at once, I couldn't blame her.

"I haven't got much money." Again I reached for my wallet. "But if I could get you a cup of coffee..."

Luckily, the bus came as he finished his sentence, giving my mother a way out. "Well I'd love to, but I must get going, really." She was too nice.

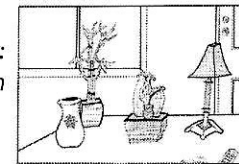
"That's fine." He said.

Right before getting on the bus, I gave the man a five dollar bill, I felt like it was both too much and too little. He refused the money, said he had plenty of his own, which took me aback. He then pulled from his boxers a wad of money, in which I could see both a fifty dollar bill, and a one hundred. It was then at that second, that it occurred to me, the man was not poor and homeless, but perhaps simply mentally ill, unable to cope with the world, and that brief moment where he smiled and asked

my mom to what amounted to a date, was what may be his last sane act, and all at once he seemed strangely more human, he had a story to him. I got on the bus opened my window, and looked back at the bus stop. He was gone. I heard a faint rustle of fabric behind the small shrubs, but I assumed it was nothing more than a rabbit, perhaps jumping in some leaves.

A silence fell over me and my mother as we rode the bus from a place where the sobering effects of reality were so strong, to a fantasy land where one could get essentially drunk on happiness and dreams. The great irony of it all was a bit like how one's foot feels when it's asleep and one tries to awaken it, the combination of pain and pleasure was almost too much to bear.

Illustration by:
Nigel D. Sherman



Everyday Colors

Adilene Acosta

J is blue like waves caressing the sand at the surface throughout the peaceful night; sky path leading us to the heavens; snowflakes dancing down into the cushioned ground

L is red like a ripe, round apple waiting to be rescued from the grasps of branches; bright ribbons decorating the long, silky hair; patriotic colors on both flags reflecting my culture

A is orange like pumpkins adorning the spooky night of Halloween; sticky juice streaming down from the *mangoniada* into my hands; ancient leaves crushing against my footsteps

M is yellow like the dazzling stars winking at us from high above; sunflowers soaking the warmth and light, gifts from the sun; pot of gold gently glistening at the end of the rainbow

C is brown like the yummy chocolate fudge topping an ice cream sundae; puppy's soft fur longing to be petted; scrumptious chocolate chip cookie crumbs melting inside my mouth

The Greatest Play of All

Crystal Mendoza

Seeing through these sad eyes
The world, a play in itself, revolves
Waiting for someone to ruin a scene
Best friend is no part to play
He is my everything but am I his?

Does he notice?
Does he care?
Can he see me as more than a friend?
I'm here in this scene
I want to tell him
Shall I change my script?
Or should I let him break my heart?

Facing the music
I tell him against my intuition
Dark, ominous, nothing can be seen
I play the part I rehearsed so very hard
No, he does not stick to the normal script, I was sure he had
Off to what I do not recognize
He feels the same way
Is this a dream?

This is not the play I expected
Things worked in my favor
What is the line between reality and imagination?
Is this occurring in a corner of my mind?
Does he really love me?
True or not I will find out,
If in fact this is real



Edgar Terminel

Alone with Blondes

Myranda Summers

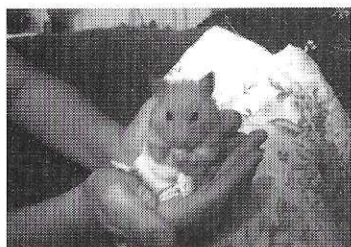
If you are a blonde DO NOT READ THIS!!!

Here I am,
Alone with blondes.
It seems that everywhere I turn they're there.
In class, at lunch, everywhere.
Where I came from, brunettes like me were the dominant ones,
But now I am alone,
Alone in their midst,
And I must abide by their rules.
Oh no!
They see me,
They're upon me!
I must run,
FAST!
I sprint away as fast as I can!
I stop,
Too tired to go on.
Suddenly they grab me!
One has a knife,
A butcher's knife.
She stabs at me!
Then all is dark.
When I wake up the first thing I hear is the sound of the blondes,
The cursed blondes,
Pounding angrily on the door.
My eyes adjust to the darkness.
I look around.
I am in a classroom.
On a table is a small pile of food.
I sit at a desk and write:
Here I am,
Alone in a room with a limited supply of food,
And a bunch of blondes,
Pounding angrily on the door.

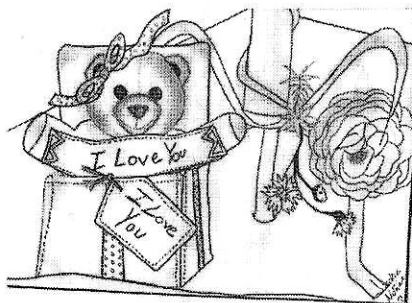


Slash

Noah Slavin

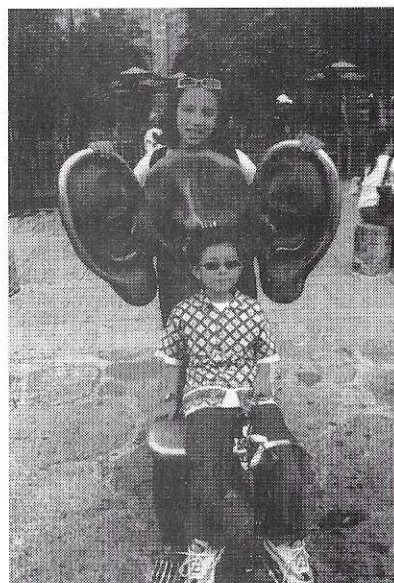


Vera Araiza



I Love You

Jackie Nuñez

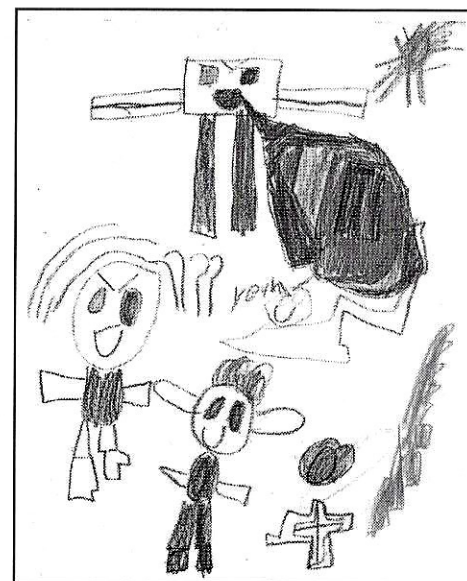


Robert Ferrell

Salsa and the Candy Monster

Adam Laird

Salsa is going out into the world and sees gray smoke. So then he comes, looks at it and runs, runs and runs and runs... until he crashes into this green, spooky candy monster. All of the monster's candy fell out. Salsa said, "Yay! Candy, wohoooo!" He's running five blocks to tell his friends about the candy monster. They said cool, let's go get some candy! All of a sudden, CRASH! They got hit by flying candy. The candy was flying 5,000 feet out of the universe, not even close to Mars. The monster was throwing up. Everybody pinched their noses before they could smell the nasty candy vomit. They started to vomit candy, too! Then they all moaned "ughhhhh." The monster dusted off his hands and said, "My work here is done!" Every piñata from the show *Viva Piñata* said, "You're under arrest, sucker!"



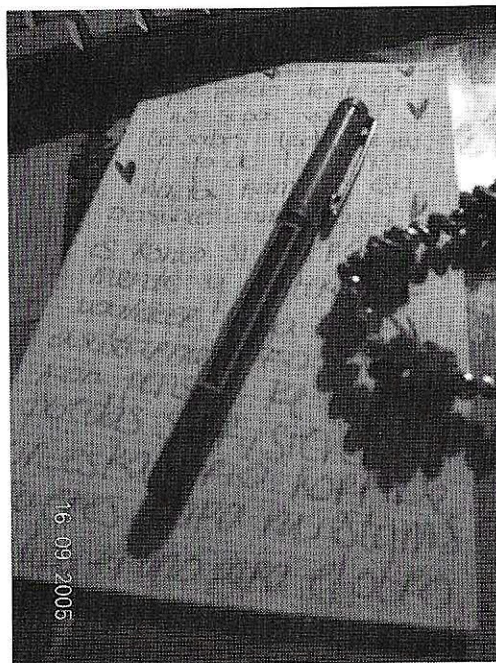
Adam Laird

Sad Girls

Gloria Michaud

All the sad girls crying for patients
 All the sad girls hoping for a life
 All the sad girls wishing they were you
 All the sad girls trying to be bright
 All the sad girls mumbling sorrow words
 All the sad girls escaping the world
 All the sad girls screaming from the pain
 All the sad girls quivering lonely
 All the sad girls cloaking in black clothes
 All the sad girls dying ambition

All you sad girls, you will not be forgotten



*Aida E.
Gonzalez*

Lunatic

Armando Gaona Jr.

I am ashamed
 Ashamed of leaving
 you all behind
 In the middle
 Of a great process
 Each and every
 one of you
 The preponderance of
 humanity is my
 passion

Those who
 disagree with us
 must be changed
 which
 My wisdom of
 public service
 are to have
 basic needs
 water, food,
 a decent shelter
 along with pleasures
 of life it offers
 On this one struggling earth
 To look over
 each others behind
 Individual Moral
 Still blinds it
 My purpose
 In life is to
 Better humankind
 And you still
 Think I'm a lunatic

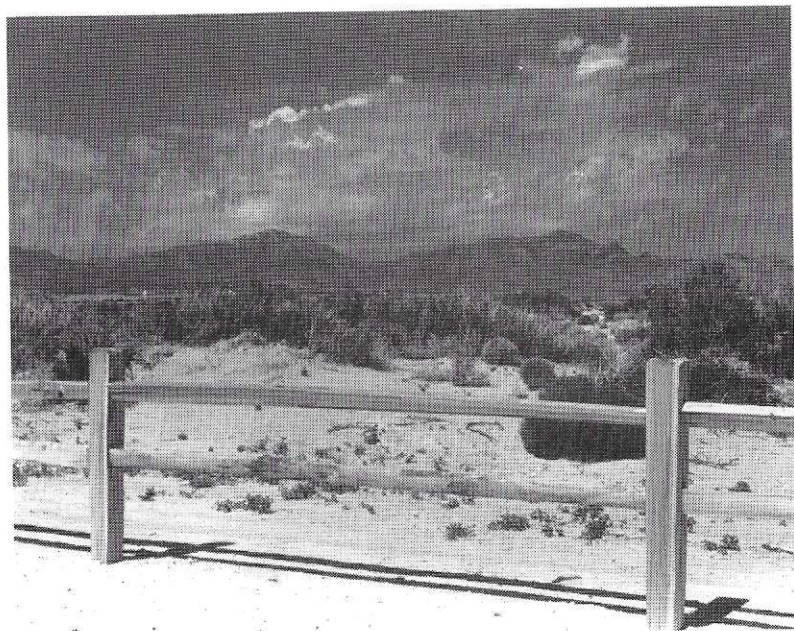


Singer Otep at Loco Fest
Noely Ann Gonzalez

Hoy Le Pregunté

Jesus Arredondo

Hoy le pregunté a Dios: Es pecado amar?
Quiero estar seguro.
Hoy le pregunté, cómo puedo saber si en realidad es amor?
Mi mente no es mi mente si mis pensamientos no están presentes.
Otra pregunta le pregunté a Dios ayúdame a terminar de quererla.
Por favor Dios perdóname si
Te vuelvo a preguntar si es pecado amarla.
Entonces me declaro pecador porque es mi amor, mi sueño, y mi vida.



Old El Paso

Carly Barquin

Volver a Mi

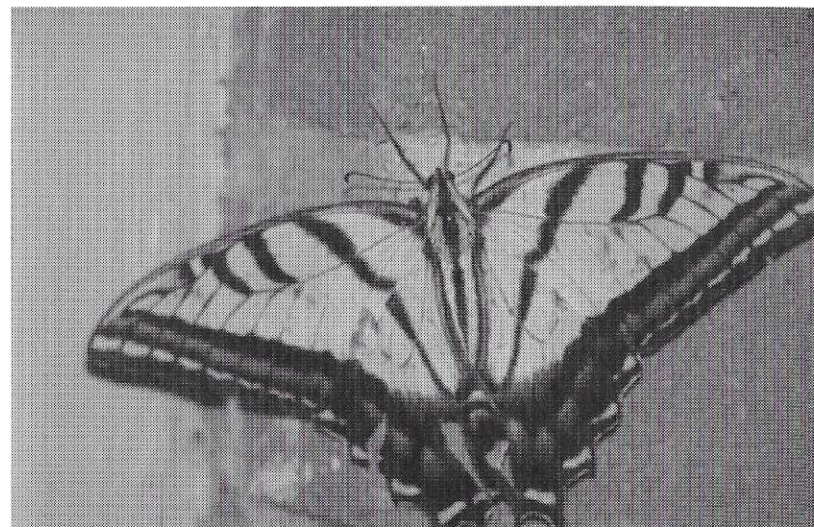
Lourdes Rivero

Cuando decidas volver a mí, regresa con el corazón limpio, con el alma buena y con tu amor lleno de ternura hacia mí.

Para poder entregarme de nuevo y recibirme como ayer, con los brazos abiertos, esperándote solo a ti.

Cuando decidas volver a mí, vuelve cuando la tarde decline, cuando la noche sea oscura y la lluvia empiece a caer

Para que mi llanto no se escuche, para saber que vuelvo a vivir al despertar al nuevo día y tenerte junto a mí.



Rare Chance

Isaac Medina

Our highlight reel is looped

Ryan Perry

Our highlight reel is looped
I saw it in the driving scene,
Before you saw the UFO float over a small German village,
After you kissed the girl
There's a grainy edit
A splice made by careless hands
But the music doesn't skip a beat
Your friends all change names
And
Your girl always looks different but
It's all looped
Over and over and over
There was a brief moment
A distraction, rewind and ill cue the glimpse
Its right when
Our highlight reel is looped,
I saw it in the driving scene
Before you saw the UFO float over
the small German village
Before you got the chance to kiss
the girl
Did you see it?
There's a grainy edit
A splice made by careless hands
The music doesn't skip a beat
Your friends all change names
And
Your girl always looks the same but
It's all looped
Over and over and over again
There was a brief moment
Rewind and I'll try to show you
Right when
Our highlight reel is looped



Secret
Hugo Fierro

Spiritual Discernment Blessed him in Prayer

Darvis De Shod

He remembered the wet shiny skin from the thick legs of a flock of wild black horses running freely.
Angel eyes in crystal stood over his shadow.
Mysterious white cotton appeared underneath the soles of his flat feet.
He often repeated the word, "Peony."
Rose, Peony and Vanilla saturates the air's season within Fall,
blessing him with the gifts from the lotus flower.

"In his vision, he is the core of a dark blue sea over looking the salt of the land from an eagle's eye.
His spirit says: "Fly in freedom, fly in freedom, fly in freedom."
Now! he can sense, touch, taste, smell everything as if it was for the very first time."

Lavender in ocean breezes,
spiritual turquoise,
and dark royal purple gives him hope for what is to come to past.

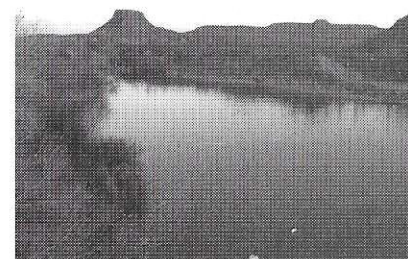
The spirit of peace says:

Ameeennnnnnnnnnnn

Ameeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeennnnnnnnnnnn

Amennnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn

It is done,
he has been marked by the burn
from the yellow sunlight,
salt of the land, invisible of the
air,
and the sound of thunderous sea
waves.



Vera Araiza

Trial of the Womb

Betty Ruiz

For a minute I thought I was pregnant
I considered all my options from
sterile medical clinical abortion to
crossing the border and getting
a cheap dose of Cytopec
I knew to give birth would be the death sentence
of all my dreams and aspirations
I thought it foolish I should be so selfish
to carry this image of a vibrant successful childless creative woman
so close to my tits
that I was white knuckled unwilling to allow
the creation of a spirit to come forth from my female limbs

In turmoil, I asked other women's experiences
Have you ever had an abortion?
They confirmed their past roles in such acts of murder
and termed it bad karma to terminate a fetus
and something from which one never recovers
so I knew my decision making was over
I had blown my cover

I remember my sister running far and fast
then cramping on the sofa with a whimper
I remember my mother cutting the weeds
After an argument with my father
then the red full body profile of my baby brother
swimming in the dirty water
I remember my cousin cruising to the clinic
and getting high on some chronic right after
to keep the tears from spilling
and then I remember me and my disheveled laughter

In the uncertainty of my trial I turned to the gospel, I turned to praying,
I am not ready for a baby
No no no so will you please kindly
Take him from my body
I'm too much of a slacker
To give birth to a miracle on earth
I am not ready for a baby you know me
I admit it, I did go to the clinic
my intent was to get rid of it
Positively, Fortunately, Ironically,
the test
came back
negative
"Sometimes we believe it so much, symptoms manifest" the smiling
nurse said.
I still did not feel at ease
The seed of probability fed my disease

My choice fluctuated between
keeping it, giving it up for adoption or
killing it through bloody expensive abortion
Every morning, I touched my belly
I felt queasy,
I rolled on top of my pillow
and moaned
I felt guilty,
I imagined the baby in my arms
breast feeding
I imagined the baby looking at me
with googly eyes
I cried and I prayed for the day
when everything would be clarified

God, I am not ready for this blessing
You've bestowed upon my body
God, you are divine

And I know you know my mind and I
Cannot handle the emotional burden of this gift

God listens well enough:
I woke up
went to pee
and when I wiped
I saw red
filled with glee
I fell on my knees
and wept
I promised never again unprotected sex
condoms until then
but ASAP to the gyn to plead
plug in the IUD, please

My womb is not ready to accept responsibility.

Dos Corazones

Diana Mojica

De una linda amistad empezó,
Y se juntaron dos corazones solitarios;
Los corazones de dos simples mercenarios.

Un romance enfurecido surgió,
Como un pez del agua hambriento,
Para vivir un mundo de fantasía
Que no se pudo llevar ni el mismo fuerte viento.

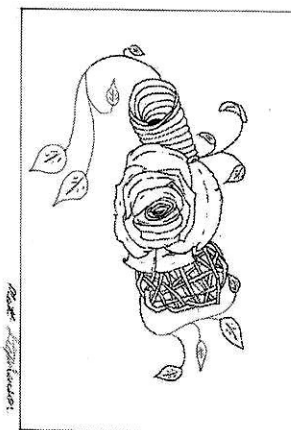
Dos corazones pasajeros y engañados,
Dos corazones viajeros y marcados,
Que juntos se perdieron en un cálido atardecer,
Para juntos recibir al nuevo lindo amanecer.

Fragile

Esther Olivares

El amor es una palabra tan frágil
Definida por la línea del tiempo,
Perseguida por la costumbre
Y el aburrimiento.

Constante incertidumbre da en cada verso
Una mentira al que solo
Quiere el cuerpo.
Mas el sentimiento, cae
En lo más profundo del Corazón,
Encontrando con el vacío el último
suspiro de amor
Cuando el amargo adiós muestra la cara.



Matt Stephenson

Faces I Saw Today

Angelina Arellanes-Núñez

The faces I saw today have shown me the power of life in more than one way.

They come for excruciating pain; they come for an emaciating vein; they come for embarrassing gain.

Oh! So many faces, indeed, I saw today.

The faces I saw today; they come to class everyday

I saw the face of fear; it came with all its devastating gear; it took all those who were near.

I saw the face of depression; it came with violent passion; it fiercely robbed all of determination.

I saw the face of violence; it came in without conscience; voraciously, it destroyed all patience.

I saw the face of addiction; it came disguised as affliction; it shattered all ambition.

These are the faces that show the power of life in many ways

They come for excruciating pain; they come for an emaciating vein; they come for embarrassing gain.

Oh! So many faces, indeed, I saw today.

The faces I saw today; they come to class everyday

These are the faces that threaten my class in an awful way.

These are the faces I have learned to admire in a special way.

These are the faces I respect for being here today.

These are the faces that show the power of life in many ways.

The faces I saw today have shown me the power of life in more than one way

They come for excruciating pain; they come for an emaciating vein; they come for embarrassing gain.

Oh! So many faces, indeed, I saw today.

The faces I saw today; they come to class everyday.



Kristina Beulieu

Corazón Abierto

Martha Morales

Mociuaquetzque
Mujeres muertas en el parto
Su oncólogo le dijo
"Blanca Xochitl estás
En la cuarta etapa"
Ella visualizó en su mente
"Remover todo mi pecho izquierdo!"
Con su corazón abierto
Ella le tocó a su soledad
Con las puertas cerradas
Mociuaquetzque
Mujeres muertas en el parto
Los guerreros aztecas
Mociuaquetzque
Talismán
Valentía y triunfo en la batalla
Blanca Xochitl con su corazón abierto
Ya no le toca a su soledad
Con las puertas cerradas
Mociuaquetzque

Raramuri Children

Eduardo Servin



De acuerdo al diccionario Náhuatl mociuaquetzque significa las mujeres que se mueren en el parto, para los guerreros aztecas, mociuaquetzque era un talismán, que les daba valentía y triunfo en las batallas. Blanca al enfrentarse a la sociedad sin su pecho izquierdo ha sido una mujer guerrera, muy valiente y triunfó en la batalla contra el cáncer.

Note by Note

Irma Villanueva

The music is in my head,
Just feel the notes come as a thread,
So thin and delicate,
And able to create.

How the strings of my bass,
Will lead me out of this place,
To reach the deep and intense sound of another dimension,
Is my first intension.

My fingers, they move across the board,
Sometimes high and sometimes low.

No fear to lose the rhythm,
Or my freedom.

Note by note,
I find the right tone.

There is no reason for me to make a mistake,
For it is all in my head.

And as I play,
In this place, I will find the day,
When my mind in haze,
Will reach the end of this maze.



Aida E. Gonzalez

They say it derived from homosexuality
 Those who are ignorant human beings
 To base it in a sexual preference
 Is not seeing reality and taking acceptance

I have a friend who's infected
 He's only 15, got it from his mamma
 Using drugs, to make his time go by faster
 And heal the pain inside him

One out of every five live with it
 Waiting for their time to pass by
 And dreading the day they die

Just like Jim Morrison sang,
 "5 to 1 baby, 1 in 5,
 No one here gets out alive..."

Sleeping in your body
 Don't be too fast to assume you're lucky

A-I-D-S
 America Isn't Doing Squat
 A-I-D-S

Go get tested only to find out your pregnant
 Not only that, your HIV infected
 Surprise, surprise
 You got it after a few years had gone by
 By that teenage lover
 That played you like a mime

The highest percentage is in Africa
 Don't be fooled
 To sleep just with anyone
 Because it might come back right at ya!

I walked through million miles of jungle
 I walked through blood red miles of pain
 I crossed starvation and deserts
 Watched dead rivers swell with rain
 Went from end to end to end
 And from there I went again
 The road that only this man knows
 Off to nowhere here I go.

Finding peace comes so hard
 Makes me see truths
 But it bleeds and scars
 Now sometimes I wish that I didn't know
 What I know now
 The past is dead, but so unkind
 The future looks bright, but it does not look pretty.

At night the highway cars they roar
 They talk to me and tell me more
 Than any book I've ever read
 Or any thing you've ever said
 Seems to me I've never had a choice
 I've seen too many bloody wars
 And different worlds collide
 Seasons burn and crack my skin
 I sleep outside, but live within.

DEDICATIONS; a Simile of Love

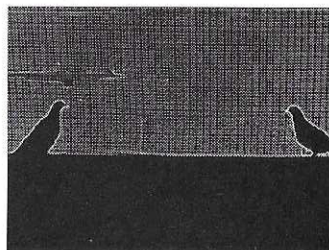
Wayne E. Gibbs

The following I dedicate to you.
A Rose as such, to remind me of the beauty of which I see in you
The Sun, as it brings warmth to each and every person it touches
The Rain, when it falls gently upon your face
Feeling an emotional emptiness, when you are not here with me
The words of a Love song, to capture a feeling thru music when we
dance cheek to cheek
I would give you the world, if it were mine knowing it would be in
good hands.
All this and more, I dedicate in the message above.
But the most important thing I dedicate of all
My love

Untitled

Bob Foster

How can I touch the hearts of others
Can you let me touch your heart
Can you let me after all the disappointments you have had
How can you let me touch your heart
I can see the pain in the way you stand when you smile
How can I touch your tender heart
No one should be close to you
Your heart is as soft as a cloud
never trust it?
No.
Trust someone.
You will never love again without the
fear of pain
But pain is a part of life
Let me touch your heart
It may hurt
It may hurt
But let me touch your heart



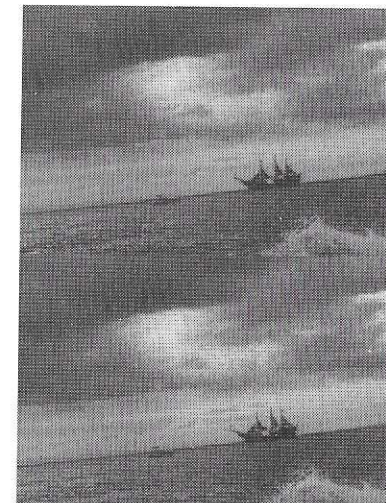
Couple

Juan F. Ramirez

Feeling Nothing

Noely Ann Gonzalez

Wet rain, firm and frozen, damp and
hard
The sleepiness of forever, the
blackness of eternal night
Darkness so intense, loud sounds so
extreme
An atmosphere so intolerable, quiet
and silent
Nothing to see but faint rays of light
Or was the light not altogether?
Big heads stood in cold, trembling
convulsively
Wildly, crazily
Being carefully cautiously
Being free with no rules but blackness
and vacancy



Doubles Puerto Vallarta 2007

Robert Ferrell

My Life Until Now

Diana Diaz

When the light of your soul appears before you
When the cloud covers you up, like a tide, as you lay
getting carried
When at last, you feel whole
Yet so broken

When the wings are off the dark angel
When the call for tranquility seems fictional
When the ocean of purity pierces
And you wake up...
That is what I call my life until now!

Father to Son!

Paul Cordova

Well, Anthony, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been
no Walk in the Park
It's had Rough Terrain,
And Soft grassy fields,
And Rocky Paths,
And Soft Sand under the toe!
Hardships!
But all the time I've been Enjoying
the Beauty,
And Playing About,
And Running through fields,

And sometimes Falling Down.
So Anthony, Don't you Fret.
Don you worry,
'Cause you find It's kind of hard.
Don't you get discouraged now—
For I'm still Playing in the sun,
Anthony,
I'm still Laying on the Grass.
And Learning to read for me ain't
been no Walk in the Park!

From Sister to Brother

Gabriela Ontiveros

Well George, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been no beautiful jungle.
It's had angry wild animals,
And non-ending lightning fires,
And fallen trees,
And non-stop volcano eruptions —
Just Dark.
But all the time I've been listening to different bird's sounds
And feeling the mist from the waterfalls
And surrounded by beautiful flowers,
And sometimes trying to climb the highest tangled tree.
So George, don't you let go.
Don't you slip or go down the trail.
Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you fall from that tree now —
For I'm still reaching for a goal, George,
I'm still climbing the highest tree because I will reach sunlight.
And learning to read for me ain't been no beautiful jungle.

From Grownup to a Child

Bren Truesdale

Well, kiddo, I'll tell you:
Learning to read for me ain't been
no Sunday Drive
It's had traffic,

And potholes,
And turns,
And detours all along the way —
Chaos

But all the time I've been driving
on,
And patching holes,
And shifting gears,

And sometimes making my own
road

So kiddo, don't you get in a rut,
Don't you stay in first gear,
'Cause you find it's kinda hard
Don't you make a wrong turn now —

For I'm still shifting gears, kiddo,
I'm still gaining speed.
And learning to read ain't been no
Sunday drive.

Brother to Brother

Israel Roman

Well, Marce, I'll tell you:
Learning to become a good man like our father ain't been a swim in the
beach,
It's had its hard winds, cold water, dark moments and the shallow feeling,
But all the time I've been about to give up the great model that our father
has given us,
The pride that he has given us, hard work that he has done for us,
Every tear of sweat that has run down his forehead, just to give us a better
future,
And sometimes the temptation of the world has come to me,
The question is what do I do? So do I fall or keep going?
Don't you see where I'm coming from? I know you're the oldest,
And I'm the youngest, different expectations,
But the thing that I really know that we will become good men,
Why? Because we come from a good man,
Learning to become a good man has not been a simple task,
We do this for ourselves and for father.

That Patti

Robert Ferrell

Trying to catch Patti is like trying to catch sand.

E Maj 7

You feel her slipping through the fingers of your
A Maj 7/ G#
hand.

You think you've got her,

D Min 7

but she's got you.

G Maj 7

And there ain't nothing

C Maj 7/ B

that you'd rather do

E Min 4

than catch Patti.

Eb Maj 7

She's played this game with thousands of guys.

By now, she probably believes her own lies.

B' the games not over till

What's laying down is you.

And everybody knows

But you

About Patti.

That Patti

You say you play 'cause you feel so small

Ab Maj 7

To know, to her, you are nothing at all

Db Maj 7

What you want is for her to want you!

Gb Maj 7

That's not true.

F 8 C 8

That's something that she'll never do.

C Min 7

And you know it.

C Min 7/ D Min 7

She'll get as close to you as a vampire to blood.

You only love her 'cause she ain't no good.

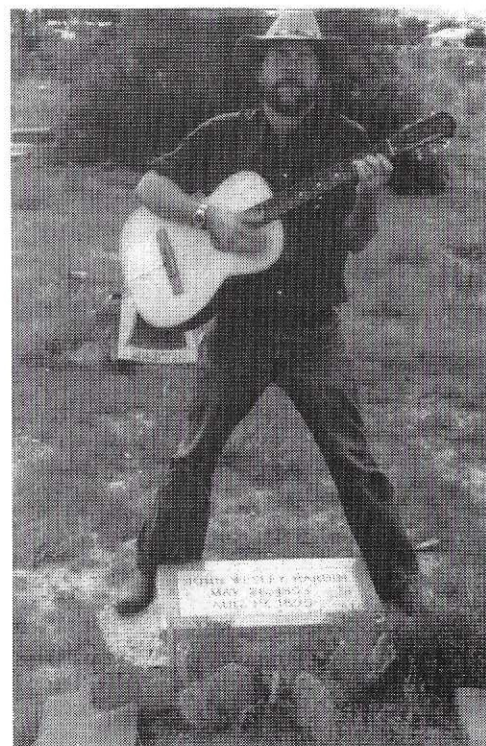
When the money's all gone,

She'll be too.

Then you'll find out what you're goin t' do
without Patti.

That Patti.

Ooh Patti.



Robert
Ferrell

Outside, on the Lawn of the Shady Oaks Hotel *Jim Iholts*

Hi there, it's me. Hey! I brought you some flowers: look, daisies, your favorites! Well, aren't you going to say anything?

Oh, I get it! You're still mad at me! I know, I know, it's all my fault! You had nothing to do with it! Nothing at all! Go ahead, blame it all on me, I'm used to it!

Well, if you're not going to take the daisies and you're not going to say anything then I'll do the talking. No, no, don't get up this won't take long.

She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. Here, have a stem! 'S plenty more where that one came from!

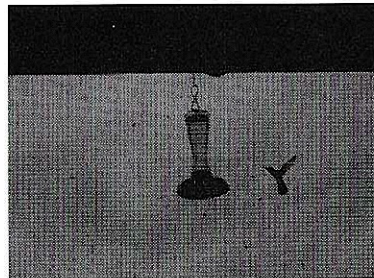
She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. Not! She loves me not! She! Loves! Me! Not! Here! Here's your daisies! Nothing but a bunch of stems!

You know, I don't have to stay here. I can leave anytime, anytime I want. I can go back to my room. There are maids that take care of me. They clean up after me, they feed me, they give me meds, they bathe me. Yes, that's right, they bathe me. And they're pretty too, they're very pretty. Except when they lock me up in my room at night. And then it gets so lonely, I get so lonely without you by my side. And so you see I have to come here to see you. You understand that, don't you? I have to come here to see you.

Hey look, I've got to go, they're gonna be checking up on me. They're always checking up on me. I try to tell them that I'm fine but they're always watching me. Hey look, I'm sorry about the daisies, I'll bring you some more next time. I left the stems on that stone in the ground with your name on it. See you tomorrow.

She loves me. She loves me not. She loves me. She loves me not.

Alonso Mesa

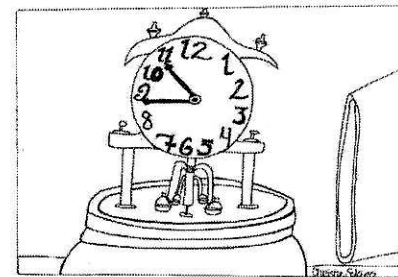


Dream of Desire

Julio Fierro

The clock this midnight
I dash to the midnight's air
the warm wind blowing in
my face as I see her figure closing in
not just another walk at the park but a dream with my desire
her hair blowing in the wind
the stare she has makes my fingers
tinge

I know she cares that something's
wrong but tonight not about me
So tell me, do these stories in your
eyes tell your problems?
Sitting under summer skies talking
one the line green grass
I can't help but to wish that
a day you'll be mine
Next time that I'm here
I hope our lips can meet

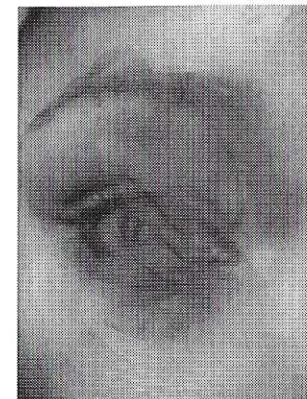


Never Ending Time
Christie Solano

In Her Eyes

Terry Josiah Sharpe

As she closes her eyes
Her mind opens up
She breathes then sighs
Her hearts torn apart
But no matter what happens
Through thick and through thin
The rift and the rafter
The thick and the slim
He stays on her mind
He's the love of her life
She seem only him
As she closes her eyes



In Her Eyes
Terry Josiah Sharpe

Weeping

Krystal Hoganson

All alone here I weep.
This jar I hold, my tears I'll keep.
And with just a loving, gentle sweep,
I shall be guided through,
And end up with you.
My wishes petty, yet meek.

For all there is, is you.
And you are all but true.
And there is nothing left to do,
But sit here and weep
Not waking your sleep
My heart held strong, held on by glue.

The pieces of its being wearing thin.
The material replaced and taped again.
When will you realize you can win?
Just one more break,
That's all it will take
And love will be my final sin.

For I have loved you and no one more.
My love has been left, in faithful store.
Affected me to my very core.
How it should be
Between you and me
For each other we both adore

Confusing? Yes, this must be.
It makes no sense even to me,
But the end is what we wait to see.
But for now I weep
And my tears I keep
While waiting for all eternity.



Mary T.M. Ojeda

Clousseau

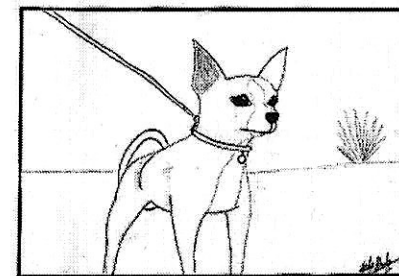
Geraldine Taft

We once had a dog named Clousseau,
Who out to the back fence would go...
To bark at a dog as big as a hog,
When the fence was his only defense.

Now here sits our dog named Clousseau,
Who learns so very, very slow...
For a dog who gets beat,
Every week on his seat,
About minding he still doesn't know.

We'll all miss our dog named Clousseau,
Who out the front door did go...
Didn't get very far, got hit by a car,
Now he's gone where the good doggies go.

We still mourn our dog named Clousseau,
Especially his good friend named Beau...
Now he sleeps in the yard with his friend Beau on guard,
And a rose at the tip of his nose.



Amadeus Miranda

Desierto de Huesos

Annette Baca

El sol me deshace, el aire seca mi piel morena...
Cada día me pierdo más entre la arena

Los ciegos me convierten en leyenda
Entre hierbas, basura, y huesos ajenos como una más en ofrenda... El desierto
me estrena

Solo mi madre me hace menos, nadie derrama lágrimas por muertos ajenos,
será solo un río pero tan frío siento tu interés que parecen siglos entre
esos pies

Me hundo entre voces...

Sombras, son solo sombras las que pasan por acá
Ojala estén aquí mis huesos cuando llegues a pasar
Cuando te interese lo suficiente mi verdad

A mi madre se le nublan los recuerdos mi nombre se perdió y mi caso por
los
Desinteresados se cerró.

Tu Voz

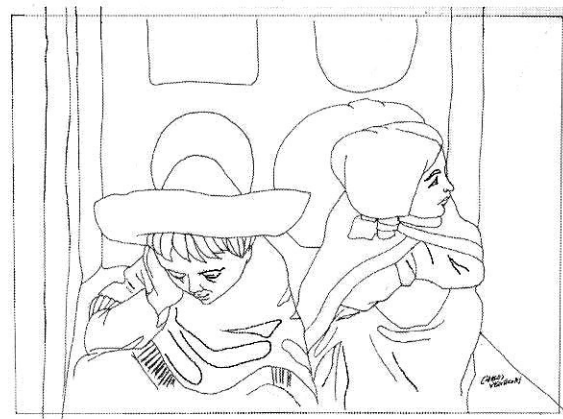
Lourdes A. Paul

Respiro de tu aire que me hace vibrar,
Y cierro los ojos para poder sentir tu voz
Y dejarme llevar como si estuviera entre tus brazos;

Y detengo el tiempo en un momento,
En dos instantes,
En tres intentos.

Tus manos arrastran mi alma hacia la tuya;
Tu boca me lanza la sonrisa que me atrapa,
Y me deja entre tus sábanas.

Tu calor agita mi vida y me llena de esperanza;
Tu aliento me acelera la respiración y me soba mi anhelo;
Eso pasa si respiro de tu aire que me hace vibrar,
Y si cierro los ojos para poder sentir tu voz.



Poverty
Carlos
Venegas

El Hormiguero

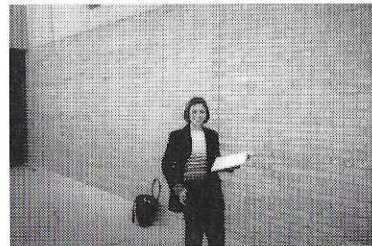
Reyna Villa

Oh! Carnaval de vanidades
Muchachas con caras de tontas
Vanas lisonjas y fingidas sonrisas
Unos, en el hormiguero
Moviendo de pies hasta cejas
Otros sentados, inmóviles
Sintiéndose en rejas
Vestimentas de pobreza
O vestimentas de grandeza
Todos mirándose analizadamente
Y otros mas profundamente
Farsantes sin par
Parlanchines por fuerza
Tópicos, risas las de siempre
Mas todos ante la misma farsa
Seguimos sonrientes

Anhelo

For Professor Lezlie Gonzales

Lo quieres lo deseas, tienes potencial
defiende tu derecho.



Maria Gandarilla

Yearning

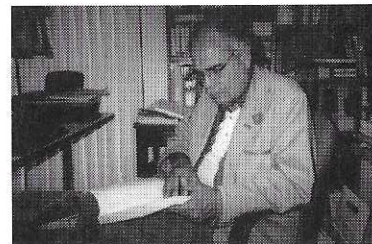
What you wish you want, you have potential
defend your right.

Maria Gandarilla

Pensamiento

For Professor Eugenio Galindo

Qué tierno cuando me dijiste acepto
professor: "Eugenio Galindo"
Proyectas el pensamiento, dando el
conocimiento liberando las cadenas de
la ignorancia.



Maria Gandarilla

Thought

How tender when you said I
accept professor to me: "Eugene
Galindo" You project the thought, giving
the knowledge releasing the chains of
ignorance.

Maria Gandarilla

Conqueror to Survivor

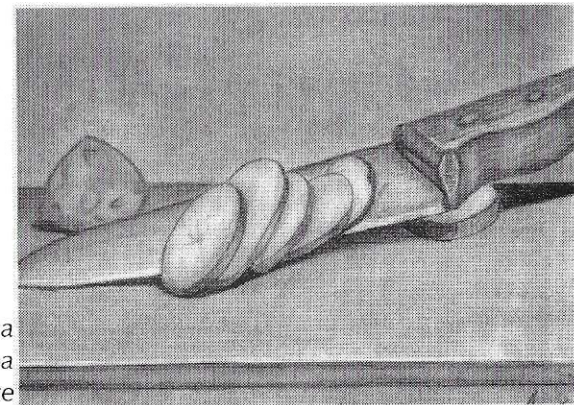
Brenda Janeth Reyes

Well survivor, I'll tell you:
This world hasn't been a utopia.
It's had bloody tears,
And bumpy roads,
And painful test,
And permanent lessons —
Necessary.

But all the time I've been smiling back
And drying my tears,
And working for better,
And sometimes looking at the sky knowing everything will be all right.

So survivor, don't you ever look down.
Don't you ever feel sorry for yourself,
'Cause you find it's kind of hard.
Don't you let down your sword now—

For I'm still fighting, survivor,
I'm still believing in the Man above.
And this world hasn't been a utopia.



Norma
Melissa
House

Inspiration

Griselda Muñoz

Turning in the T.V.
Regis smiling back at me
Rags to riches!-geek to chic!
Donald Trump later this week
Martha Stewart in the can
"she's so well rested, what a tan"
Tom Cruise is getting crazier
Britney getting lazier
Walking down my street
No one here they'd want to meet
No one here they'd interview
Or want the name of their Guru
Or ask who makes the latest shoe...
Just a sea of brown
Driving through my side on town
Wouldn't give a second look
At the family who took
All the blood and sweat and tears
In the fields for countless years
For all that wine that you've been sneaking
While your husband's at this morning meeting

Inspiration is a whore:

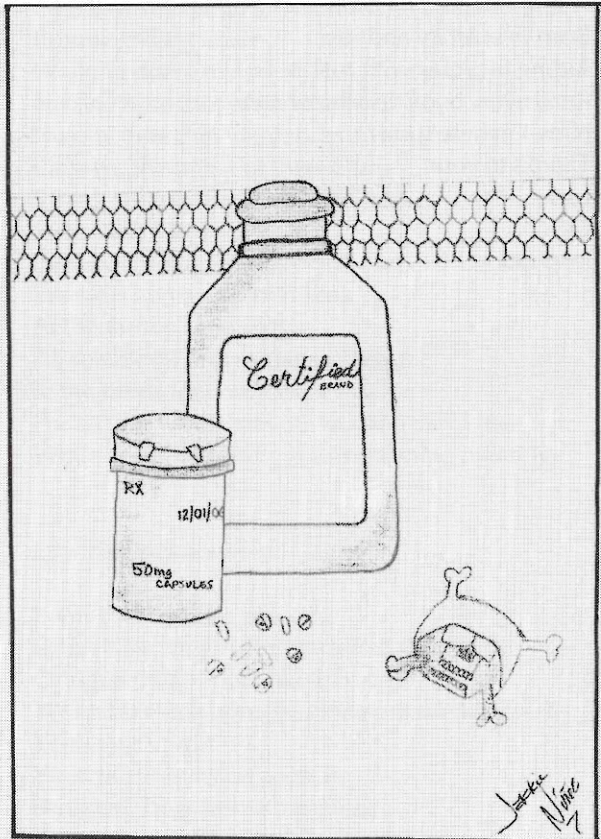
I don't want to be like you
Don't care who makes the latest shoe
Or what rich people like to eat
When there's a homeless kids out on the street
Yeah that's right
Your administration's wack
Bring our boys home from Iraq
I'm not mad cause I'm ignored

I am pissed cause you're adored
Because you're a celebrity
With no civil responsibility
Because our faith is dying
Because all the dead are crying
Because all the ones that have the bucks
They don't really give a fuck
It's rough to be in my position
A senorita on a mission
Born of scarcity and rust
Riding bicycles with rust
Read every book you threw away
Now I'm here today
Thanks to your
Lack.
Of
Inspiration

Untitled

Griselda Guilberteau

These pills kill wills
and distant thrills,
of the spiritual souls true cheers,
They just train your brain to disdain
And run away from the pain you truly feel.



Jackie Nuñez

Give you the love

Joseph K. Hobdy

I don't want to give you any reason why you can't trust me
Though, many times before, I didn't take the time with you
I want to show you I'm sincere, that what I say is true
I'm making time and no more excuses why I can't give you
Give you the love.

Give you the love that you so deserve
I took you for granted so long
Boy, I've got some nerve
I need a second chance to make things right with you
I am down on my knees
Really to give my all to you.

Stuff happened in my life that I have never shared with you
A rolled coaster ride I am now off, because of you
I now have reason and a purpose for this live I live
From now on, I dedicate my life to give
Give you the love.

Give you the love that you so deserve
I took you for granted so long
Boy, I've got some nerve
I need a second chance to make things right with you
I am down on my knees
Ready to give my all to you

I'm asking for a second chance
So, will you give it?

In Memoriam

To Remember

Graciella Ogaz

Always felt as if math class was my worst enemy and we would never get along. 0303 would just feel like quantum mechanics, but soon proved myself wrong. With your ability and talent to explain problem solving came easy now. Arriving early was a routine for us because you knew I had a problem and you gracefully took the time to explain it step by step. It is as if I got a new pair of eyes in which now I saw the beauty in numbers and not the terrifying sense of failing. How do you describe the feeling of missing someone that has taught you not to fear? I can only say that you took your time and that time we had I will cherish forever. You taught me so much that I discovered the confidence within myself to know that I can do anything. God knows best for every one and I thank Him for letting us cross paths in life. You will always be in my heart, to you Miss Mary D. Alanis.



Our Love to you, Papa

Roberta A. Rodriguez

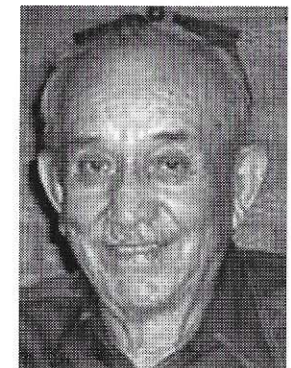
I will never forget you, Papa
You loved me and
Loved my son even more

He changed your name to Papa
And when he called you
Your smile would show and your laughter too
That you enjoyed your new name
You called him your son

You were different, but your heart was big
You were stubborn, but eventually gave in
You always thought you were right
But I could always get you to change

It took my son to capture your heart
To bring out the love you had and shared
He knows you loved him, as I did
You were a special father to him
He will never forget you
As I never will either

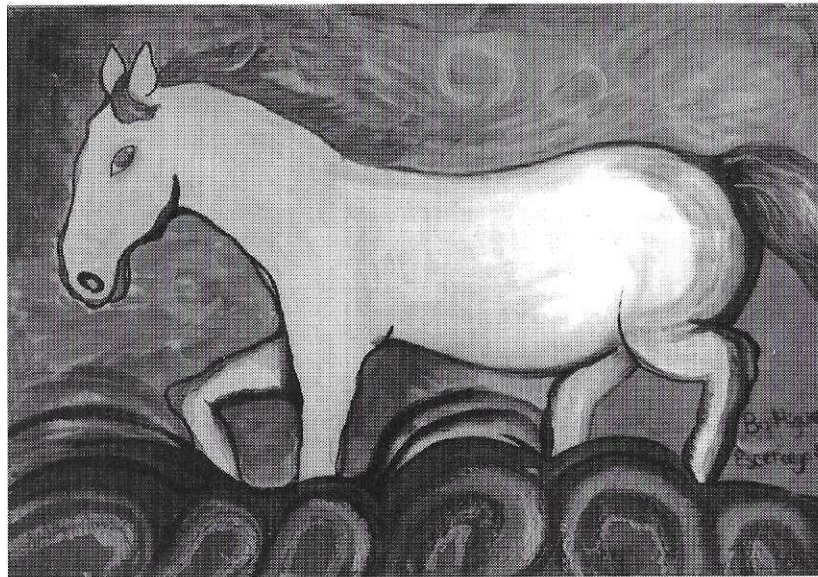
I miss you already
I know our son does too
As our hearts heal
We will always remember
You were the best Papa ever!



Miguel Angel Escarcega

Aileen A. Escarcega

Miguel Angel Escarcega was the most beautiful kid in this world. His cousin Aileen loved him more than life itself, and she will miss her little artist. He was a great painter, loved animals and French music. His family will always have him in their memories and in their hearts.



Miguel Angel Escarcega

Any Deemed Worthy

Tafari Nugent

Sound

We say nothing, and yet we speak.
What full words can quench this thirst?
How can I see through such dark days?

Strive

When we try we succeed.
When we fail we succeed.
So long as you live you succeed.

In Time

Slowly descending to the dew stricken meadow, I
spy crows numbering three in a solemn lumbering oak tree.
Or is it that that they are spying on me?
Feeling a cringe of unease, again is it me or is it the three.
Three crows flew silently from a tree solemn and lumbering in a
dew stricken meadow of memory.

Mirror

Where lay my heart?
Where is my home?
What is it that sets me apart, to wander and roam?
Do I seek redemption, from which hand comes salvation?
(Perhaps I need a more reflective surface to see myself.)

True

Truth a matter of which side of the fence you stand.
Which perspective you hold which angle you take.
What joy, whose sadness, what faith, whose hopeless cry
is drowned out by moonless night. There is little solace, where
lays this land of truth that emboldens the soul to live, to strive.

Sweet Serenity

Rebekah Ornelas

There is this place,
A place where I hold my darkest secret
Of a forbidden love that was found.
A love I couldn't have,
Yet my soul desired.

There are mountains full of sand.
They are white like snow.
A calming breeze flows through the air
And brings life to the sandy creatures
And desert plants.
This was my place of sweet serenity

There were no judges of any kind.
No one to sum up my life
And remind me of the choices I made.
There was just him!

We were opposites,
I was petty and polite.
He was quaint and blunt.
My life followed a successful path
His life had no path
Although un-similar, we connected.

We tumbled like children,
Rolling down the white painted dunes.
Our bodies colliding,
Our faces meeting,
With one angelic kiss.

We lay on the soft sand
And allow the grains of sand to

Dance between our toes.
The breeze comforted my body,
As the wind combed through my hair.
The sun set at just the right angle,
Illuminating his eyes.

My imagination painted a picture that day,
Of what life could have been
Unplanned, risky, and overall excitement.
But my mind reminded me of the reality
Of my picture perfect family
Awaiting my arrival.

I look back to this place
Where I don't have regrets
For the memories, but a regret
For not following the feelings of serenity
On the top of White Sands New Mexico.



Leslie Council

Mattress

David Perea

This morning, my mattress is the most beloved of my possessions. Soft and firm, pink with flowers and always there when I walk in my apartment after any given agonies of any given day. Only recently I came to possess something that I truly appreciate. I use to sleep on a mattress two inches thick and barely large enough for my small frame. Stained with body grease, that mattress was for its part my bed and home. I lived on a Navy ship and the only place that was partly mine was where I slept. My possessions: a few books, two pairs of jeans, a few T-shirts, brown leather shoes and essential toiletries, were all I had. I could fit it all in my sea bag. I didn't have a phone. I carried a around a twenty dollar calling card that I bought every month. If I needed to talk to someone, I found a pay phone. After work, my days were spent wandering. No calls, no company, just a full wallet and time. I would read the paper at the train station and watch the travelers, wander in and out of bars and movie theaters daily. Sometimes I would ride the trolley without a destination, or I stayed at cheap two storey motels with palm trees or auto shops for a view out the bathroom window; where I read and drank and had the freedom to be naked. The world and its things were for me to use and never to keep, care for or fret over. I wandered as myself, tied to nothing, mobile. I lived with great maneuverability.

Now times are different, and someone is knocking on my door. The old couple next door are out for a fight. They believe I am the cause of their overflowing garbage disposal. The knocking stops and I lay in comfort.

Now times are different, and I lie on my mattress in peace, in a new stagnation. I left the Navy, and, now I have my mattress, my apartment, my couch, my carpet, my coffee table, coffee maker, dishes, air conditioner, and phone. Sometimes people call me, other times, I have to carry it around in case someone calls me. Toilets over flow, drains clog, appliances break, neighbors are loud and inconsiderate. Maintenance has to be done and things need to be cared for and tended too. I bought and use a plastic wand with disposable brushes to clean my toilet. When the brown ring became darker, I went to the store to get more disposable brushes, but they had none that fit my plastic wand. I had to buy the new model of the

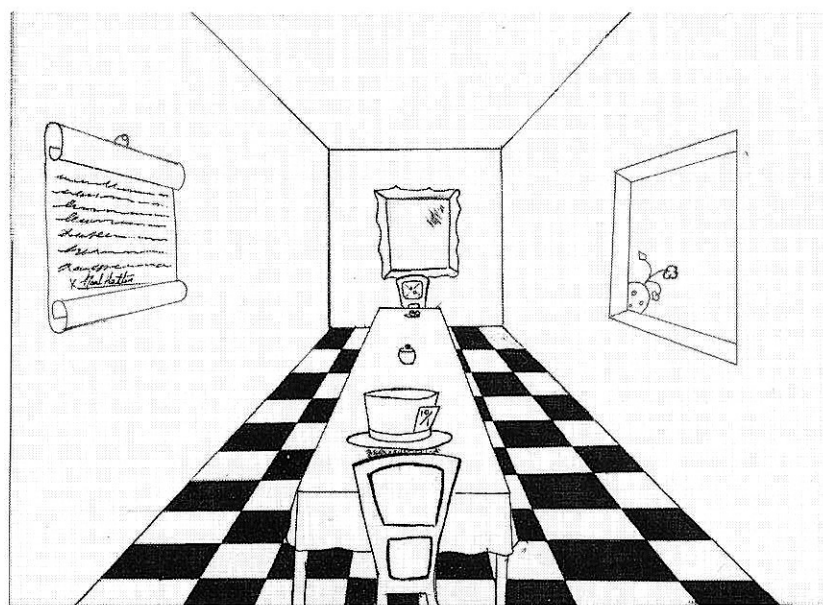
wand, with its new disposable brushes. Technology changes too fast for me.

I hear the loud and frenzied footfalls in the room above me, and cannot go back to sleep. I get up to go to the mailbox with the promise of a new unemployment check. Outside where it is hot and the sun is bright and terrible, I see an old neighbor of mine I call Carlos. I don't know his name, but he looks like a Carlos. He walks to the short wall behind the dumpster where he has a flask hidden on the other side of the wall within the mortar, in place of a stone. He sits and takes a few hits and nods to me. In the mailbox, there is no unemployment check and my key is stuck. A few jerks, and I get it out. I walk back to my apartment, stuck in the stagnation without a check, without reprieve.

Soon the checks will stop coming and I'll have to work, a new stagnation with new agonies. I prepare for the hunt. I eat a small can of tuna fish with crackers and drink a cup of coffee. Clean and dressed, I go back out into the hot sun to look for a job. A few places have openings I found in the classifieds. Bus boy, server, security, hotel front desk clerk and runner.

As I walk toward the street to the bus stop, Carlos is coming out for another drink. I have only heard him speak Spanish, so our communication is limited to short gestures of kindness. I wave goodbye over my shoulder and head for the street. The traffic is loud and the crowd at the bus stop is quiet in the shade. I sit down with my back against the wall of an old gas station and wait for the bus. I wait with the common comfort of purpose. Comfortable in the merit to maintain and flow with the stagnation. No more wanderings.

Waiting for the bus, I am remembering the better times. The times without purpose. A far more pleasant stagnation than this. I had maneuverability. Many people take pride in the hardship of going to work, earning a living and working long hours, or at least they boast about it at length. I had always tried to progress toward perfection, perfection of living. Maybe they got it right. Maybe progressing is perfection. Just to move, just to progress. They are perfect in the persistence of existing. I am still happier wandering where I please, without care or worry about overflowing garbage disposals, the technological advances of cleaning gear, phone calls and the classifieds.



Lizette Arenas

Job Interview: To Be or Not To Be A Bum?

Ricardo Mejia

Are you one of those people that really don't like to work? Or maybe you are the kind of person that will go to apply for a job, but you will do anything not to get hired and it always fails. This is for the guys out there that are being asked by their mother to go get a job and stop being such a bum. Maybe your mother said that all you had to do was go to school and work wasn't necessary for you, so you are trying to hold her up to her word. I know that you are out there and even though it sounds crazy, here are the steps that are guaranteed to work for you. I have so much faith in these steps because they keep working for me. I was also once a manager that did the hiring for a grocery store. These are the things that I was trained to look for. Poor hygiene, bad manners and showing no interest in the job are the things that I keep in mind when I don't want to get hired. Just keep in mind that it is very important that you follow my directions so that you don't end up at a job that you don't want.

Bad hygiene is something that will surely get the person that is trying to hire you to begin to wonder if you are the right person for the job. Let's say that you have your interview at about ten in the morning and you have known for about a week because it has already been rescheduled once. You make sure that you don't shave for about a week, so that the day of your interview you look like Chubaka. For those of you that don't know, Chubaka is the hairy creature from Star Wars. Then you have to make sure that you don't jump in the shower for at least three days before the interview. You have to make sure that you smell like a trash can that has needed to be cleaned for months now. Let's go ahead and not brush our teeth either. Now when getting dressed, wear dirty socks and your sandals that you have had for the past three years. If you want to throw in bonus, let's go ahead and run in some mud the night before. Get a shirt out of the bottom of the dirty clothes and wear that as an undershirt. Now it is up to you if you want to wear a clean shirt on top, but please don't iron it. The jeans have to be torn at the knees, if they're not then take some scissors and do it yourself. Also, make sure that you show up late. People really go based

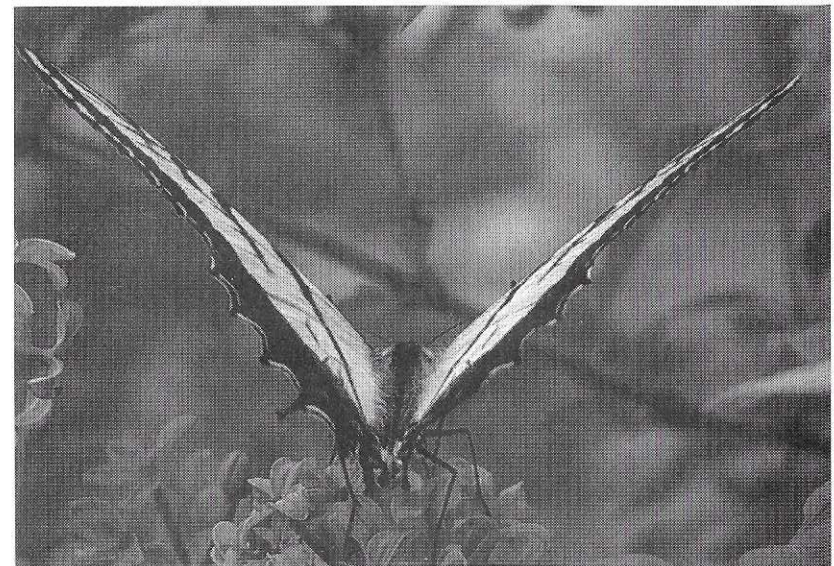
on the first impression; walking in with bad hygiene will guarantee a bad impression.

Hygiene isn't the only thing that will keep you from getting a job. Showing interest in the job that is being applied for is something that the employees look for. So after neither showering nor shaving walk into the work place with no manners. Instead of saying hi, good afternoon, walk in and say, what's up dog! Try to walk in and use slang. Don't talk to the interviewer the way that you would talk at home. Talk to them the way that guys talk to each other when they have been drinking at night at a bar. After you walk in don't shake the interviewer's hand or make eye contact. If they ask you to sit down, sit in the chair and slouch, the way that it is done at the movies when you have to sit in the front row. If they don't ask you to have a seat stand with your hands in your pocket and look everywhere else, but directly at the person giving the interview. In this way, when they ask you a question, your answer will be "huh" or "sorry, I wasn't listening; can you repeat that." This will surely irritate the interviewer, making him think twice about giving you the job. You can also not say "hi" to any of the workers that are there at the moment that he is giving you the tour of the place. That way they will see that you are not a team player.

By this time they will be thinking and asking themselves if you are really qualified or if you are even really interested in this job. That is going to be your last strategy, to show that you have absolutely no interest in the job that they are offering. Bad hygiene and bad manners are important when it comes to not getting hired. When they ask you, "What do you think that you have to offer to this company," you tell them, "I don't know. I really don't want to work at all." Being a team player is very important to a company. Let them know that you don't work well with people and that you hate when people tell you what to do. Let them know that your mom or wife is making you get a job because all you do at home is play video games and watch movies. Also, giving them a scenario about your behavior at home is a good idea. Explain that you have a dog and don't clean the feces. Also, that you don't like to help with the chores and that is why you agreed to go look for a job. Showing lack of responsibility will put the employer over the edge and they will not give you the job. Trust me.

Your being a rude slob that lacks responsibility and common sense is

the last thing that any boss will want for their company. These are the steps that I took when I didn't want to get hired for a job. You have realized that not working has allowed you to catch up with better video games. Also, let's not forget that you haven't missed a movie on TNT for the past six months. So if you have decided that this is the life for you, just remember this. If you want to do something you will find a way. If you don't want to do something you will always find an excuse. Just keep yourself rude, dirty, and lazy and you will always be a bum.



Joyce Whiteside

Dancing Around an Issue

Dolores Castillo

The other day I was listening to a song that I had heard many times before. I like it very much, but never had stopped to really think about it, nor had I ever analyzed it.

My husband and I have been separated for many years. Just recently we started "dating" again. In the last few months we have gone dancing more times than we had in the last few years before our separation.

When dancing, my husband turns into the man I long remember. In his arms, dancing the night away, I experience the most enjoyable sensations. The world, its problems, strains and stresses all melt away with every beat of the melody. Only the music, my husband, and I exist. We swing and sway harmoniously and in unison as any married couple should do, not only when dancing, but also when dealing with home, kids, and daily strife. When either one of us takes a wrong step, or makes a wrong move, the other stops and pauses and even at times laughs and waits until the one who blundered regains composure. The blunderer is neither belittled nor made fun of nor is reprimanded for the mistake. There are also no accusations, incriminations, or allegations in regard to the mistake. The next step is again taken jointly, mutually, collectively, united. Isn't this the way it should always be? I want to literally hang on to my husband for dear life. I don't want the music to stop, I don't want the melodiousness to end, and I don't want the intimacy to cease. When I personally make the mistake, my husband holds me even closer. He gently and smoothly and even humorously waits and guides me to the correct step. There have even been times that I am allowed to synchronize the next step. I am allowed to be the leader, conductor, director and all without rejection, reproach or criticism. I want to clamor and explain that this is how our lives together should have been, especially when life did not go the way we wanted. This is the time to know that the other one is going to be there to depend on, and rely on and catch you before you fall.

So I dedicate this song to you, Hector; all dear husbands and lovers:

*Could I have this dance for the rest of my life?
Would you be my partner every night?
When we're together, it feels so right
Could I have this dance for the rest of my life?*



Amadeus Miranda

After the Chrysalis – On Top of the Mountain

Arlene C. Hernando

I wrote a story about a caterpillar in a chrysalis form of which represented a great personal challenge that I was experiencing at that time. It was published in El Paso Community College's Chrysalis publication in 2001. The story was about how that caterpillar (me) had lived in a greenhouse which was my home that I had established and maintained for my children and spouse. I had done this for almost thirty-seven years, my secure domain, or so I thought until the shock of a personal upheaval came that catapulted me into a cocoon, also known as a chrysalis. This is where many of us go when we are in great pain or disbelief, forming ourselves into a ball or fetal position. At that time I was envisioning the hope most humans with faith have that somehow I would survive all the traumas and emerge as a butterfly. "I was just in transition" I thought . . . really wanting to believe this at the time, although I did not feel it. I was just going through the motions of life, like those little wind-up robots that smack into a wall, bounce off into a different direction, and continue to repeat the process over and over again, constantly moving, not really going to any apparent destination and not even knowing the possible outcome. You could also classify it as free falling, not knowing when or where the falling will stop and not being sure your parachute is going to even open! During this time with the support of God, my family, friends and Project ARRIBA, I got my Associates Degree here at El Paso Community College.

Something that was therapeutic both physically and emotionally for me was my love for dance and song. I started line dancing almost right away. In addition, I did my student co-op with the Senior Adult Program. There in this program, I was with my peers, doing things most persons at this age are doing, just starting to enjoy a more leisure lifestyle, even though one never knows what speed bumps and pitfalls are in store for us in life.

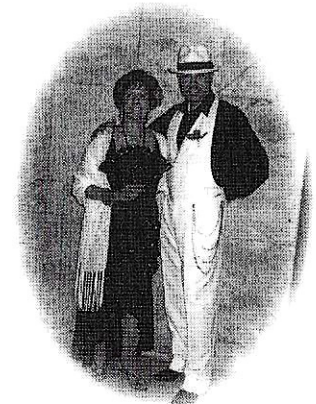
Finally with God's help, I was able to emerge from the chrysalis as a social butterfly. I have been dancing in several groups and performing for various Senior programs and events for the last four and a half years. I have also been involved in all aspects of these events multi-tasking as graphic designer, mistress of ceremonies, videographer, dance and computer instructor and recognized as a part-time employee of the month.

Now something has shaken my world once again, not a mother of all storms nor as devastating as the one I wrote and described in my writing seven years ago, but "una tempestad" – my loose translation – "an inconvenience." However, a lesson learned from the previous experience, speak up for yourself; don't be a doormat. In speaking up, you do have to face some consequences. I am no longer participating in the senior events representing the Senior Adult Program as I did in the past. However, just like the last critical time in my life, one door closes and another one opens. At one point years ago, I thought the opening that was given to me was a window with wrought iron bars on it, slightly cracked open! I realize now that instead of that window, God opened the garage door for me. I now have the enjoyment of my dance, music and song as some of my upfront priorities.

I am now involved in trying to promote the performing arts, and I along with Jsalo, are very proud to have formed the group Son Danzon in an effort to revive the lost art of dancing the Danzon. Recently we represented the United States at the Primero Encuentro de los Dansoneros in Juarez, Mexico. Presentations were from many regions of Mexico including Vera Cruz and Mexico City. Our appearance made it an "international" affair which was a great boost to our goal.

Many things can be taken away from me; however, it is a mistake not to take a stand for what you believe is right. There are more things that cannot be taken away from you and only if you let it happen. I know I will survive this too, despite my critics. Marie Osmond recently said, "...But for women who find themselves like me, a single mom, you know that at 48 . . . life is not over. I would rather climb a mountain, than crawl in a hole." So here I am almost on top of the mountain! Once I had written that I would someday come out of my chrysalis and soar like an eagle, and I believe I am doing just that!

Arlene C. Hernando



Rising to the Occasion

(A Fantasy of a romantic nature)

Charlotte A. Shaefer

All was quite in the clinic. Only a soft light glowed in the medicine cabinet on the far wall. At the stroke of midnight three tiny figures gathered by the lab counter. Valentine's Day had been a busy time for all three of them.

The oldest of the group was named Vi Agra. She poured thimble's full of champagne for each of them and nodding to her two companions, said "Cheers girls, how did it go?"

Lee vitra, who had worked who had worked at the lab for about six months said, "I was really rather nervous as to how it would go with my client. I have never worked a Valentine's Day before. But it went okay. My client was middle-aged sports guy, who hadn't been pleasing his young wife a lot lately. He had always been used to giving orders to everyone around him. However, there comes a time in some men's lives when they have to seek help. We had his pretty wife "purring like a kitten," before the evening was over.

"Excellent job Lea. a job well done. How was your evening, Ci?" asked Vi, as she raised her drink to Ci Alis, the newest member of the group.

"Golly, I was very worried! I just started this job you know. I am brand new in the market. My client was a young executive type. He had managed to get a date with a beautiful secretary from his office complex. He didn't want to leave anything to chance, so he asked for a double order. I told him that it may be too much as I was brand new in the field, but he said 'nothing ventured, nothing gained.' Well, let me tell you, Ladies, he gained so much he didn't wind down till the crack of dawn! He was really scaring me and his date was getting nervous, too. He however was rather proud of his accomplishments."

"How did your night go, Vi?" asked Lee.

"Unfortunately, not as well as it did for you two, my client was a heavy drinker. He managed to get this 'young thing' to go up to his room with him. I whispered in his ear, that alcohol and my ingredients could cause him serious health problems. He just 'poo-pooed' my warning and

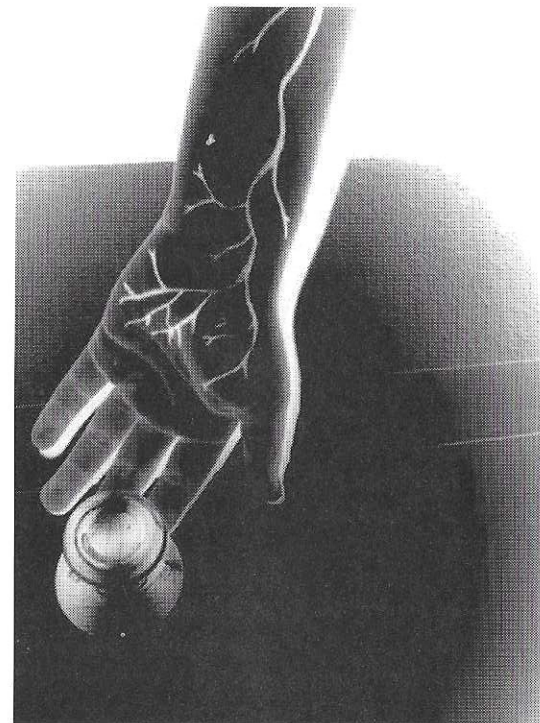
took another gulp of his gin and tonic. After several hours of frolicking in the sheets, he stood up to go to the bathroom and collapsed on the floor."

"Oh my," gasped Ci, "was he okay?"

"Sadly, no. his 'sweet young thing,' called 911, but it was too late. He was DOA by the time the Medics got him to the hospital. Anyway," smiled Vi, until these guys start reading the fine print on us, so much for romance!"

"How sad," said Lee.

"Good grief!" said Imi Trex, who had been eavesdropping on the whole conversation from behind the Bunsen Burner, "I'm going to bed, you three are giving me a migraine!"



Rush of Blood

Juan F. Ramirez

Pessimist Vs Optimist

David Chavez

Many people are concerned about the real definition of pessimism and optimism. A pessimist is a very negative person, somebody who always expects the worst to happen. An optimist on the other hand is somebody positive, somebody who tends to feel hopeful and positive about future outcomes. The one thing that makes the difference between a pessimist and an optimist is expectation and attitude.

A pessimist will always have a negative attitude and will always expect the worst to happen. On awakening, pessimists rub their eyes, clear their throat, look out the window and say with a frown, "Good god, morning!" pessimistic people turn all conversations into griping, complaining, or bitching sessions. They have nothing good to say about them, do not try anything new or challenging because they are afraid of failing, limit their horizons which results in limiting my their personal growth. All of these are some of the examples on how to identify a pessimist person.

Pessimism can affect your personal life in ways that you can not imagine. Once a person is identified as a pessimist, other people will avoid talking to them and will constantly be criticized by family, coworkers, and friends. No one will ever ask about his opinion on a school or work project because the answer will always be something negative and not constructive. This will lead pessimist people to believe that everything that happens around them is their fault, causing them to isolate themselves and get depressed when thinking about their future. They also think that they are not fun to be around so they put a huge barrier between them and others and become depressed.

Being a pessimist can influence how long and how well you live in every aspect of your life. Because we know that pessimism causes stress pessimists are more likely to die sooner from heart problems and other diseases like Alzheimer's. The reason why is that people who are pessimists are always stressed, depressed and anxious about the things that are happening around them; in other words, pessimists worry too much on things that are not that serious and worry even more on those that are.

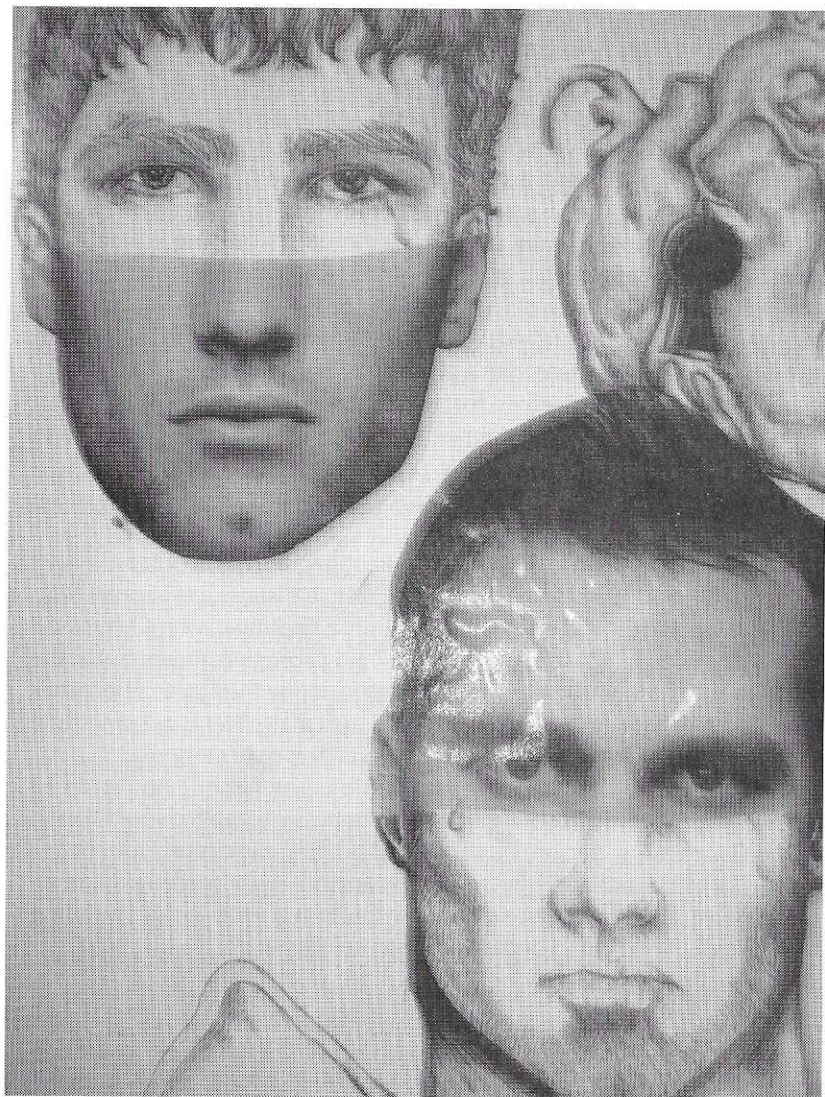
On the other hand an optimistic person on awakening, open the window and say with a smile, "Good morning, God!" Optimistic people

believe they have control over the future, look at the good side of each conversation, optimistic people believe on themselves and others, they try new things because they are not afraid of failing, never limit their horizons and therefore their personal growth is not limited. An optimistic person will always have a positive attitude and expects good things to happen.

Unlike pessimists, optimist people seem to have a better personal life that is not affected by the way they act. People identify optimistic people and try to stay as close as they can so that they can learn something from them. Optimistic people usually get awards and positive comments about them. Being positive is one of the qualities of this type of people and that is the reason why other individuals come to them and ask for assistance when working on something like a project. When something goes wrong, instead of blaming themselves for what happened they look at it as a learning experience so that next time that they try something new the same mistake is not made. An optimistic person is never sad, he or she will always be happy no matter what kind of difficulties he or she is going through.

An optimistic person is known to live longer and be happier in every aspect of their lives. Even those who suffer from a disease are happier than those who are healthy but look at things in a negative way. Optimistic people suffer more from deception of not being able to achieve, but at the same time fight harder to make sure that the next time they try this becomes a success. An optimistic person will always look at problems as something that needs to happen before they can achieve their expectations.

Everything points out as optimist people being better than pessimist ones. So here are some tips for those who are pessimists and would like to become an optimistic person: be strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind. Talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet. Think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best. This will help you to become an optimistic person.



Monica De La Torre



Irma

1

Sunshine travels through the shattered glass of a hospital's windowpane—another morning. Trevor opens his eyes, startled by the breath of a new day. Alarmed, nearly panicking, he lets his hands journey his body, exploring it limb to limb. He feels the structure of his skeleton, the texture of his skin, and the volume of his flesh, seeking for any anomaly. Everything is familiar. He relaxes, panting deeply, and turns to glance at the girl that lies next to him. She sleeps a peaceful slumber and Trevor wishes he could sleep that way. He hears her create a soft and silent humming sound similar to the sound of the wind going through a crop of wheat during a summer afternoon. Her body is beautiful. Since he met her, it has always been that way, and it always will be.

"Leigh," Trevor says. "Leigh, wake up."

The girl opens her eyes, blue and green and brown. Hazel. Trevor smiles at her, and the smile itself reassures her.

"Trev?" she whispers.

Nothing's wrong. Nothing has happened to us.

Trevor turns and faces Gene. Gene's hollow pale face is half buried within crossed arms, with eyes open and notoriously irritated. His hands are shaking nervously.

"You okay, G?" Trevor says.

"Do I look okay? Can anyone be okay with something like this? I mean look around us! Fuck! Don't tell me you're okay!"

"I'm okay."

"Bullshit."

"I'm okay."

They are silent for a moment, and then Trevor rises and stretches his arms. They ache a little when he does that. He gives Leigh a hand and pulls her up, doing the same with Gene. Gene starts to cry. He always does when another morning arrives. He doesn't stop for quite a while. Trevor holds him. It's the best he can do. Gene is just too stubborn to take any encouraging words. Either that or he is all too realistic. They keep holding each other until Gene's weeping turns into a lower sob. Every time this happens, Leigh feels her heart break. She wants to cry. How she wishes she could, but she can't. Not her. It's something about her that has been in her

since age eight.

It was winter when her mother had to undergo a minor surgery. A kidney stone had been bothering her for some time and the best way to get rid of it was to destroy it with the use of laser technology, so said the doctor. It was a simple procedure, and practically had no risk involved—so said the doctor. It took a minor mistake; a miscalculated use of anesthesia to end the life of a middle-aged woman, mother of two. The night it happened, Leigh's father came home weeping. Having a hard time doing so, he told her Mother was not coming back. She cried all night long, hard and desperate, and it seemed to have no end. But it had an end, and when she stopped her weeping, she promised to herself that she would never in her life cry again. Years later, having held her tears inside and seeking to relieve herself of some pressure, she had tried to do so but the effort was useless. She had already forgotten how to cry.

"Hold me," Leigh says after Trevor lets go of a whimpering Gene. "Please hold me."

Trevor holds her tighter than ever and kisses her lips. She is trying so hard to cry now, but she can't. He looks at her and remembers the first day he saw her. It was springtime. She was that girl who sat alone at lunch in a shadowy corner with a paperback and a cup of black coffee. She was that girl with long velvet dresses and high-heel shoes or platform boots. She was delicate and beautiful and passionate and mysterious. She was everything he wished for, and one day his wishes came true.

Gene has been Trevor's best friend for the past three years. They have no secrets between them, they share everything they possess, and they know everything about each other. Gene had always been a loner before Trevor started speaking to him. He is the kind of person who lets his emotions take over his rational sense. That had sometimes been a problem.

Once, in the midst of a cold winter morning, Gene had gone over to Trevor's house. He cried nervously; every part of him tainted with the faded colors of misery and despair. They went down to the basement, where they could speak without being overheard, but Gene never spoke anything related to his problem. He held a screwdriver to his throat instead, and it took Trevor an hour at the least to make him put it down. In the end, he never knew why Gene came searching for comfort on that occasion. Sometimes, it seemed that his life was a puzzle that was never meant to be solved. Episodes like those were something Trevor wanted to forget.

It was Gene who introduced him to Leigh a year and a half earlier, and it has been the best thing he has ever done for him. Before seeing Leigh, Trevor had never really loved someone. It took him some time to actually care for Gene the way he does now. It took him a look into the eyes of Leigh to know she was the one he wanted to live a life with.

They slept in the corner of a room in the first floor of the Riverside Memorial Hospital, the only functioning health facility in Riverside City, West Virginia. Today its floors are overflowed with paperwork and shattered glass from windows that mobs broke as a protest for the absence of a cure. Afterward, the hospitals were evacuated for whatever unknown reason, and left abandoned. Yet left behind, lying on the cold marble floors are bodies, twisted in unspeakable ways, their flesh tainted with deformity, and some—the most unfortunate—still gasping hard breaths of life and pain.

2

Trevor's aunt, Jacqueline Starker, was a lonely woman in the edge of her forties and the first to be found with the *condition* at Riverside City. Once in a while she received visits of relatives and high school friends, but her one true friend had always been alcohol. It did not reach an extreme that would display her as a drunk; that much is certain, but once in a while she loved the taste of bourbon and rum and an extensive selection of liquors. She had quite a personality—explosive and difficult to speak to without falling into an argument. As a result she spent most of her days alone, and even though she had many lovers throughout her life, she never got to marry a man.

Trevor's family paid a visit to Aunt Jacqueline the day of January 6th. Trevor's father knocked at the door several times while his son walked into the backyard.

"That is strange. Jacqueline knew we were coming," said Aida, Trevor's mother.

Trevor got a glance at her through a window in the back of the house. It was barely a fleeting look that only allowed him to see part of Aunt Jacqueline's feet in the darkness of her bedroom.

"Something's wrong with Aunt Jacqueline," Trevor shouted to his parents.

They went around the house and tried the backdoor open. There, Aunt Jacqueline laid face down on the floor. She breathed, yet remained unconscious, and the way her backbone contorted and arched was clearly

unnatural. They tried waking her up, and succeeded in their attempt. She woke with a shriek of pain that had to be the worst sound Trevor had ever heard in his 19 years of living. She convulsed violently but seemed to be conscious of her actions as she tried to reach for Aida's feet. Everyone remained in shock, terrified by the sight of their relative in such condition. After a long and excruciating moment of screams, cries, and convulsions, she passed out again.

At first, the doctors hinted that Jacqueline suffered from Paget's disease of the bone or Bacterial Meningitis, but discarded both diagnosis after getting negative results on various clinical tests and the absence of other symptoms. After a few days it hit the news that cases similar to that of poor Aunt Jacqueline were happening worldwide and spreading rapidly as an epidemic, seemingly without any explanation.

3

It is already noon. Trevor, Leigh, and Gene walk down the stairs of the hospital silently. Lying on the stairway halfway down are the remains of an old woman. Her body has adopted the shape of the stairs beneath it, as if it had somehow turned into a kind of dough and the steps were a mold. They walk past her, trying not to look. With a gasp the old woman faintly trembles and moans in pain, spitting blood. The sound that comes out of her mouth is trying to make up words; something that sounds like help me, or Helen. It startles Gene and makes Leigh feel sick and miserable. It depresses Trevor because the woman looks a lot like Martha Trenton, who used to take care of him when he was a child. When he thinks about it, the name of Martha's daughter was Helen.

They try not to think of themselves in the position of the old woman, but they are finding it hard not to do so. It is the scariest thought they have ever had.

"I don't want to die like this," says Leigh.

"You won't. I promise I won't let it happen," Trevor tells her.

"I want to get out of here," says Gene.

"All right, let's leave."

They walk out of the building and into a street that is nearly as polluted as the insides of the hospital. The sunlight has gone out now, and the sky suddenly seems grayer than ever. They walk north and after a few minutes they come across a man in a black suit holding up a sign that reads REPENT in broad red letters on white cardboard. To Gene and Trevor it seems to be

such a cliché. When the stranger sees them approaching he begins shouting phrases all too rapidly to be understood. They walk past him. He seems to be healthy still.

They are hungry. They walk into a corner store through the broken glass of the crystal doorway. The place has already been swept by desperate folks. On the fridges rest a couple of bottles of milk that have already gone past their expiration date. Behind the milk someone has hidden a couple of snack-packs: Turkey breast sandwiches. Trevor lets Leigh take one of them, and he cuts the other one in half to share with Gene. Gene feels too sick to eat, but still downs the slice of bread and turkey and lettuce in two bites. Leigh takes small bites off her meal. It tastes bitter and too salty. The taste tells them the meat has started to rot, but so has everything else that remains in the store.

After finishing their meal, Trevor, Leigh, and Gene get out into the streets again and retake their pace, heading north. There are no plans on where to go; they just walk for the sole purpose of walking. Gene wonders what they are looking for as they walk and why.

The sound of thunder roars slow and distant. The air smells strongly of moist earth. It's going to rain soon. Leigh loves the rain.

It's going to happen to us sooner or later.

"Where are we supposed to be going?" asks Gene.

"I... don't know. Anywhere but here," answers Trevor.

"I'm scared, Trev," Gene says in a low, low voice as if ashamed of the words he has spoken.

Trevor nods.

There's a group of men, seemingly homeless, sitting on the sidewalk. One of them, the only one who seems to be alive and well, sobs inconsolably with his face buried in his hands. On his side lie the remains of what had been a man. He is now nothing but a torso; his legs shrunk to no existence, his arms completely swallowed by his chest, his head thrown backwards with bloody saliva coming out of his mouth as a thick line drawn through his face. Another man lies besides him, one with a head that has swollen three, and maybe four times its original size. He seems to be alive still, but nothing more than a babbling, drooling façade of a man.

Lightning flashes through the sky and with the sound of a new thunder comes the rain, falling hard and cold into a world that has ceased to be human.

4

It was not Bacterial Meningitis. It was not Paget's disease. It was not even recognized as an illness or an infection as of yet. It was much more than that, and people knew it. Doctors knew it. But what was it? It spread like an epidemic, but it was *not* an epidemic. It did not seem to be contagious, for people that had not been exposed to those who had suffered the mutations had developed the condition as well.

Throughout a period of weeks, all Trevor got to see on television were scientists and doctors that looked all too polished to actually excel in their profession. They spoke theories that could explain the cause of the abrupt deformation of flesh and bones that had overtaken the world. Bacteria, exposure to radioactive material, pollution, a disorder on cell structures—everything covered and everything refuted the days that followed.

During week five after the condition was discovered, Trevor's father fell flat on the kitchen floor as he cooked breakfast for his family. And by stating it that way, it is literal. Apparently his skeletal structure had plainly ceased to exist inside him. A shriek, short and silent, and he collapsed into a lifeless mass of flesh and blood and skin. On week six and struggling with a severe depression, Trevor's mother took the car and drove it downtown to get her mind off things. She never returned home, and it was the last time Trevor saw her.

5

Rain covers the city. It falls upon Trevor and Leigh. Soon their clothes, their bodies, their souls are completely drenched. It feels cool and soothing. Trevor smiles to his lover. They love the rain. She is looking at his eyes; clear blue eyes. She sees herself reflected inside them. She laughs. She is laughing because the world around them—the horrible world that is now tainted and so unfamiliar—has vanished. All that remains is them; his timid smile, her smooth pale skin, his black-blue hair which a few minutes ago stood up in spikes, their silky, thin lips that are now touching. He holds her. She holds him. Nothing can tear them apart.

"Nothing is going to happen to us," Trevor whispers into Leigh's ear.

"Nothing," says Leigh.

"I will never leave you. We'll always be together."

"Always,"

They feel something inside them—something deeper and stronger. It cannot be anything else but the burning intensity of their passion. Their

hands travel familiar pathways over around their bodies. Only they know each other's territories. They embrace and they wish they would never lose their touch. The intensity inside them is growing. It is something they had never felt before. The passion is hurting them, but they wish it never stopped. Their eyes are closed, their mouths open and clashing. It is just too much now. Something doesn't feel right. Leigh opens her eyes. She looks down. Their lips are one. Their tongue is one. Their limbs are one sole flesh. They try to stop. They wish they could stop. They wish they could be torn apart but they are already one body. The pain strikes them; the unbearable feeling of their bones fusing together. Trevor feels Leigh trying to scream, but the scream is lost inside their shared mouth. Leigh feels Trevor's heartbeat inside their shared flesh. It is slowing down with each bolt of pain that they are feeling. It stops. She feels tears streaming down their shared skin. She is not sure if they are her own or those of her lover. Her pain is turning into numbness now. She sees only darkness and hears only silence. She wonders if she has already died. She stops breathing and begins dreaming.

6

On week ten after the 'epidemic' started, an old man with glasses, in a white shirt with a bowtie, gave a new theory on the origins of the condition. He spoke of evolution, said that the body adapts to the changes of the world and the changes of the spirit. The theory was discarded as being purely philosophical, not a proven fact.

To Trevor, this theory had more meaning than all others. In his mind, in his heart, he believed it, thinking everyone felt the same way but refused to speak about it. And he never did. With the events to come, the thoughts vanished. Knowledge no longer had a meaning.

During week twelve, Trevor received a call from Leigh. What remained of her family had disappeared. She fought back the unbearable idea of them committing suicide, but they had talked about it. She never said anything to Trevor. He moved into her house that night, and on Friday that week they walked down to the grocery store at Main Street. There they found Gene, walking in the verge of a nervous breakdown, and together they found shelter for the night in the hospital at Kingdome Road; the Riverside Memorial which had been abandoned after the riot.

There, they slept until dawn.

7

Gene walks into a record store and scans over the few selections that

are left. He hates the rain, and hates it when Trevor and Leigh get all too romantic. They wouldn't mind if he got lost for a few minutes. They wouldn't mind that at all, Gene knew it, and so he did. He spots a copy of Bauhaus' *In a Flat Field* and unwraps it. He walks behind the counter to a CD player that rests on one of the stands and introduces the compact disc into it. As the music starts playing he lights the only cigarette he has left on the pack. He has never felt as relaxed in the past twelve weeks as he is now. He thinks of nothing and lets the music and the nicotine carry him into a world of leisure that is very much unlike the one he has been living in. On the first drawer of the desk he is leaning on he finds a revolver. He takes it out and examines it. It has only two bullets left. He puts it into his back pocket with the safety on.

After listening to a couple of songs and finishing his cigarette, Gene walks out of the record store with a headache that seems to be growing into migraine. In the street he finds a bizarre sculpture of human flesh. It takes him a moment to realize that the mass of intertwined limbs is composed of Trevor and Leigh. He stumbles back and starts to cry. He begins shaking again.

"Trev? Leigh?" he whimpers. "Trev, you said this wouldn't happen to us."

He feels sick and throws up in the middle of the street.

"God, Trev! Why?"

His headache is stronger now—unbearable. His right hand meets his scalp. It feels swollen and hot. He feels his fingertips cold and numb.

It's happening to me.

The memory of Trevor's words rotates inside his head, knife-like, penetrating his every nerve.

We will be okay. This won't happen to us.

Lies.

He can't stop crying. He won't tolerate the pain. His trembling hand looks for something in his back pocket. He takes out the handgun and puts it inside his mouth. He squeezes his eyes shut and feels the cold hard steel with his lips. He pulls the trigger and hears a click. Nothing happens. A subsequent attempt, and for half a second there is a loud and soothing bang.

The pain is gone. It is pitch black and soundless. He isn't breathing... and soon, he dreams.

An excerpt from *Cross Over Water*

C/S/R

When Ruly first saw the three letters written on a desk, he thought of them as nothing more than a coincidence. Kind of like when he was thinking of a cheeseburger and strawberry shake and a Whataburger commercial came out on the TV. But when he saw the letters marked on a bathroom stall and the wall outside the gym, he figured it was by design.

Chris / Santi / Ruly

Even though he'd been tempted, he hadn't done it. So now he wondered which one of his two new jr. high friends had done it. He thought about just asking them, but figured that they would have told him about it if they wanted him to know.

Maybe this was part of their initiation. And if he asked, he might mess up his chances of being included. This actually was a fear of his when he saw "C/S" by itself, no "R." These letters could have either been before he met the two of them or a reminder that they didn't need him or his name as part of their Clica, as he'd heard them say.

When he saw other initials on the walls of the junior high, he wondered who they belonged to, what Clica.

"A" could stand for any of his classmates: Antonio, Alejandro, Agustín.

"T": Tavo, Tomás, Trinidad, Teodoro.

"M": Mario (he knew at least 5), Martín, Mando, Memo, Mundo.

"A T M" could stand for any combination of these fellow 7th graders. He was pretty sure these grafittied initials were a guy thing, so he didn't even consider thinking of the girls' names in his class. And he was pretty sure that the white kids like Andy, Thomas, or Mark didn't hang around too much outside of class. He never saw them lingering along the rear of the school or in the bathrooms, where most of the initials in sets of three appeared. No matter how many times the poor janitors scrubbed the black markings off the stalls or painted over the markings on the brick walls, the letters re-appeared, as if they simply soaked back through, like the chile colorado stain that never really came off the button white shirt he wore to church.

In addition to thinking of the C/S and C/S/R sightings as part of his initiation, he tried to figure out what else Chris and Santi might ask him to do. He stayed ready, on his toes, as his dad said when they used to play one-on-one in the driveway. He didn't want to mess his best chance at being part of a trio. Three Muskateers. Three Stooges. And even the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Each of these was famous in a way. Even if you didn't like or believe in them, he figured you knew who they were, right? There was something magical, it seemed, about threes.

As he stood next to Chris and Santi, he imagined their respective letters written on their bare chests, like he'd seen on a college football game his dad was watching on TV. Since he'd imagined this, he tried to stand on the left of both his friends. If one of them would switch places, or if he somehow ended up in the middle, like in the lunch line, he shuffled to correct the order.

C/S/R

"Thanks, dude."

"Too cool."

Chris and Santi always showed their gratitude for letting them go first, especially on lunch days when they served fish sticks. Everyone at school knew that they always ran out, so if you didn't want to eat tacos (like most every other day), then you better hustle to get to the front of the line. He could eat fish sticks anytime at home, so he preferred the school tacos. These came in hard shells and were topped with shredded orange cheese. Not in greasy corn tortillas and lumpy white cheese like his mother made for his dad. When he'd mentioned that he liked the ones at school better, his dad had said those weren't Mexican tacos. Those were American ones. Ruly figured as much given where they lived, on this side, not across the border. He didn't say anything since he knew how his dad got about anything to do with the two flags that were displayed in a painting in the entryway. While he knew he was born in the U.S., he did like that the Mexican flag was in three colored sections: green, white, and red. The eagle with a snake in his beak was also cooler looking than all those stupid stars and stripes.

With each grade he passed into, the more he seemed to realize that symbols, like letters and words, meant more than something simple. Maybe our Clica needs a flag, he thought. What would look cool with C/S/R?

A lion, a bear, a dragon. And colors? He made a mental note to find out what Chris and Santi's favorite colors were. He didn't want to ruin his initiation, so he figured the animal or whatever flag they designed would come later. He did make it a point to look at the two flags more carefully when he left his house.

Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, **Richard Yañez** is the author of *El Paso del Norte: Stories on the Border*, a finalist for the Texas Institute of Letters first book award. His work is anthologized in *Our Working Lives: Short Stories of People and Work*, *U.S. Latino Literature Today*, and *Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas-Mexican Literature*. He facilitates diverse writing workshops for community organizations and public schools through the PaPaGaYo Literary Center. He is a founding member of Con Tinta, a coalition of Chicano/Latino writer-activists. Having received a Master's of Fine Arts from Arizona State University, he earned teaching fellowships at Colorado College, the Center for Women's InterCultural Leadership at Saint Mary's College (IN), and served as a Visiting Writer at New Mexico State University. Presently, he is an associate editor for Momotombo Press and an assistant professor at El Paso Community College. He is married to the Chicana poet, Carolina Monsivais. This excerpt is from his novel-in-progress *Cross Over Water*.

David Lee Summers is an author, editor and astronomer living somewhere between the western and final frontiers in Southern New Mexico. He is the author of six books: *The Pirates of Sufiro*, *Children of the Old Stars*, *Heirs of the New Earth*, *Vampires of the Scarlet Order*, *The Solar Sea* (coming soon from LBF Books) and *Blood Sampler* (co-authored with Lee Clark Zumpe, coming soon from Sam's Dot Publishing). He is also the editor of the anthology, *Space Pirates*, coming in August from Flying Pen Press. His short fiction has appeared in such magazines as *Realms of Fantasy*, *Aoife's Kiss*, and he has a vampire story coming soon in *Cemetery Dance*. He edits the science fiction and fantasy magazine, *Tales of the Talisman*. In addition to his work in the written word, David has also worked at numerous observatories, primarily in the fields of variable star research and robotic telescopes. You can learn more about him and his work at www.davidleesummers.com. His excerpt is from his 2007 novel, *Heirs of the New Earth*.

The Craftsman

An excerpt from *Heirs of the New Earth*

David Lee Summers

Two flies buzzed and spiraled in the semi-darkness and thick, torrid atmosphere of a one-room apartment in Southern Arizona. A mountain of dirty plates clogged the sink while uneaten remnants of food littered a small table. Unwashed socks and underwear were draped carelessly over the room's two chairs and an alcove, containing a rust-stained toilet, reeked of those odors generated in the deep, dark recesses of the human body. The flies were in paradise.

Attracted to the salty sweat of the room's lone human inhabitant, the two flies lit and cavorted about on his nose only to be sent flying away as his hand swept by. The man was lying on a small cot that creaked each time he swung his arm. A clock nearby counted its way inexorably toward the time its alarm would sound. Undaunted, the flies returned time and time again. If flies had emotions, they might have thought the challenge of taking moisture from the man's nose was fun.

"Goddamn flies," grumbled the man as he swatted at the insects again. This time he sat up on his small cot and blinked at the zebra-stripe pattern on the floor made by sunlight streaming through partially closed blinds on the window. The man, Timothy Gibbs, reached out and grabbed the alarm clock and stared at the numbers for several seconds while his brain worked to interpret the numbers his eyes saw: five minutes before seven o'clock. Five minutes before the alarm was to go off. "Goddamn it," grumbled Gibbs, as he returned the clock to the nightstand. He rubbed his rough hand across a stubble-covered chin, annoyed because he wanted to go back to sleep but there wasn't enough time before the alarm would sound.

Gibbs padded over to the kitchen counter. The computer unit recognized its owner and activated a finger-greased touch pad. Bleary-eyed, he examined the choices from the small inventory of frozen meals-in-one. With a sigh, he chose the omelet and coffee and stood, listening as out-dated motors carried the meal from the freezer to the internal cooking unit. For a moment, he thought he smelled acrid, electrical smoke. With a frown, he thought perhaps he should open the unit and take a look, but decided against it as he realized the smell was actually some left-over plastic still clinging to the pre-fabricated meal.

With a stretch and a yawn, Gibbs padded to the toilet alcove and

swatted at the swirling flies that buzzed about his hair while he relieved himself. Stepping out of the alcove, he looked over at a hologram of his mother, sitting on the nightstand. He hadn't seen his mother since she lost her job at the paper cup factory nearly 20 years before. Unable to pay her weekly taxes and with Gibbs barely able to pay his own taxes, much less help her, she was taken away to a government housing complex. The government didn't bother to tell Gibbs where she was. Without a source of income, his mother couldn't afford a teleholo call to her son. Timothy Gibbs had no way of knowing whether his mother was alive or dead.

A chime sounded alerting Gibbs that his breakfast was done. He padded over, opened the unit's door and retrieved the plate of steaming food. He sipped rancid coffee while mindlessly picking a piece of blackened plastic out of the eggs. He wondered about his father – a man he never knew. Poking at the over-cooked omelet, Gibbs wondered if he, himself, was anyone's father. Like most men in the thirtieth century, including his own father, he periodically left sperm at the local Depository. Women who liked his genetic make-up and wanted children could go to the Depository for impregnation. The upside for Gibbs was that he didn't have to risk the diseases and emotional upheaval that came from a sexual relationship. The downside was that he didn't know whether he was the father of a hundred children or none at all.

Not bothering to do anything with the plate and coffee cup after breakfast, Gibbs stripped out of sweaty underclothes and stepped into the sanitizer. Even with ice mining in the asteroid belt, water was a precious commodity in Southern Arizona. He closed his eyes and enjoyed the hypersonic waves tingling against his skin, removing dirt and sweat, leaving a kind of slime in the bottom of the sanitizer that the flies would enjoy. Stepping out, and wiping his feet on the mat, Gibbs dressed in his work uniform and went out the door pausing long enough to hear the door lock automatically behind him.

Not able to afford his own hover-car, Timothy Gibbs walked the mile and a half to his job at Tanque Verde Teleholo. He was a repair technician, earning a small stipend and a commission on each of the expensive communication units he refurbished. In the thirtieth century, teleholos were considered virtually essential. With them, people communicated with one another, entertainment holograms were transmitted, games were played and finances were transacted. There was almost nothing in the way

of entertainment or communication that couldn't be done with a teleholo.

Poor as he was, there were many less fortunate than Timothy Gibbs. On his way to work, he stepped over an old man, sleeping on the sidewalk. Even the old man – too poor to afford a place to sleep with a roof over his head – clutched a portable teleholo to his chest.

Stepping through the door of Tanque Verde Teleholo, Gibbs forced himself to smile and wave at one of the sales associates, Louise Sinclair. Sinclair gestured wildly for Gibbs to come see what was playing on one of the teleholos.

"More news about the Cluster?" asked Gibbs with a weary sigh. Hovering above the teleholo dais was a familiar image – a large conglomeration of iridescent spheres. The Confederation of Homeworlds, of which Earth was a part, was fighting a one-sided war with the Cluster. Whenever the Cluster appeared, the ship it encountered was destroyed. No one knew of a single Cluster ship lost to a Homeworlds' ship. "When are they going to stop bugging us with that?" he grumbled. "It's all so far away from Earth anyway."

"This is different," she said, tersely. "A mapping ship followed the Cluster home. They finally have some idea what it is." Louise Sinclair had been following the Cluster story since day one and insisted on conveying everything she learned to her co-workers.

"Whatever," said Gibbs. He reached out as if to turn off the teleholo unit, but she batted his hand away.

"Aren't you the least bit interested in the Cluster?" She cocked her head, examining the technician. "They've been destroying ships left and right. They even threatened a colony for God's sake."

Gibbs shook his head. "Sufiro's on the other side of the galaxy. I can't waste my time worrying about things in space. I've got enough problems right here on Earth." He shrugged mock apology then made his way to the employee lounge.

Sinclair followed on his heels. "I can't believe what I'm hearing," she said, incredulous. "In the thousand years humans have been in space, the Cluster is the first intelligent life we've ever discovered that's actually bent on destroying humans. How can you ignore that?"

December 31st

An excerpt from *Pomegranate*

Ysella Fulton

Dear Coco,

Here it is – the last letter I will write you of this incredible year. I'm still trying to understand; Joaquin says that some things aren't meant to be understood, only accepted that's the mystery of it. Faith isn't necessarily seeing, but believing what you see...that's what he says, Joaquin my husband. When he said that it reminded me of seeing the Marfa Lights; remember I told you we saw those lights in Marfa, Texas that appear in the distance and no one, not even the scientists who have tried to study them can figure out what they are. And yet, there they are and for hundreds of years people have been watching, waiting for them. I don't know if Joaquin is right, I can't say that I understand about believing, but if anything this year I've learned about surrendering and forgiving (even myself) especially after what happened to my sister (which is still unbelievable). In my 40th year I finally learned about listening and I thank you again for your gracious gift of listening to me...as I listened to them...to Erica and Mia as their lives unraveled, secrets uncovered, as they dealt with the sadness that lingered like dust. Coco, there really is a terrible power in desire, in all its forms.

We're not going to Mia and Kip's this year. For obvious reasons they're not having their traditional New Year's Eve party. Joaquin decided to have a party here instead. The twins and Alex are excited to invite their friends over and they're downstairs with their favorite aunt, Nina, decorating. I'm sitting at my writing table drinking tea and eating an English muffin with the pomegranate jelly that Nina, Cecilia and I have been making for the holidays from my mother-in-law's pomegranate tree in the back yard. It's almost ironic that this year that she's been gone it gave us such abundant fruit. Coco, I'm not ready to go downstairs yet since I still can't seem to wrap my mind around everything that has happened the last twelve months.

I'd send you some of this delicious pomegranate jelly, but Nina says that it'll probably break in the mail. It's been a strange yet delightful experience learning how to make the jelly: deliberately cracking the dark pink fruit, peeling away carefully, tediously the membrane off the ruby-

ripe, jewel-like seeds and then crushing them, straining the juice, staining my hands. Christmas Eve Joaquin gave me a wonderful coffee-table book about the mysterious fruit. I thought the pomegranate was my own personal totem, my own little globe of redemption, but it turns out that for ages the pomegranate has been one of those archetypal symbols beyond religion, culture, time. In Buddhism it's considered one of three blessed fruits which are the essence of favorable influences. Did you know that there's an Islamic legend which says that the pomegranate was one of the fruits in the Garden of Eden and that even today every pomegranate bears a seed from Paradise? And the ancient Hebrews considered it sacred too, they used it for decoration in the temple, embroidered it in the vestments of the high priests, is prominently found in the Old Testament (my favorite is in the Song of Solomon) and it was thought that the pomegranate had 613 seeds which symbolized the 613 laws of the Torah.

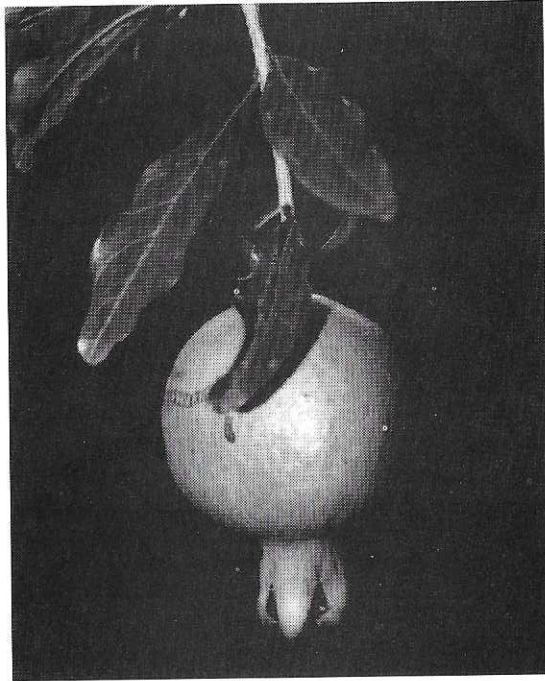
And you remember from your Art History classes how later the pomegranate became the symbol of the Church, of Christ who impregnated humanity with the divine seeds of redemption. I think I fell in love with the pomegranate years ago when we lived together and you had in your bedroom that poster of Botticelli's Madonna of the Pomegranate...the seeds symbolizing the Passion...Mary bearing the seeds of God within her body. I thought I knew what there was to know about the pomegranate, after all in my first book I wrote about the ancient symbolism of the pomegranate illustrating death and life, sexuality and fertility, love, marriage and immortality. I already used the Persephone story, her abduction by Hades, her mother's grief, doomed to stay half the year in the underworld because she ate the pomegranate seed...yet now it somehow reminds me of what happened to Erica.

There's so much more that I didn't know that I'll share with you later because Joaquin just walked in and is surprised I'm not ready yet. Oh Coco, I'm not ready to start another year when the memories of last year are still painful and raw. I've spent much of the holiday rummaging through this ancient house and I found an old book, Oscar Wilde's *A House of Pomegranates* that was Joaquin's grandfathers. I've been reading it (one of my favorite memories was reading Wilde's fairy tales to my children when they were young) anyway I also found (in boxes we left in the basement before we first moved to Spain) some of my old graduate school notes on

Wilde which said that he used the pomegranate as a metaphor for looking below the surface of the unconscious to find the substance of our lives.

If only it was that easy...

Happy New Year,
Sydney



The Pomegranate

Caryl Barquin

Ysella Fulton teaches writing and literature at EPCC, is founder and co-director of PaPaGaYo Literary Center and has been the faculty advisor for Chrysalis for the last six years. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from American University, grew-up in the Mesilla Valley, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas. Ysella has lived in Argentina, is married to classical guitarist Eric Slavin of the Santa Fe Guitar Quartet, and has two children, Nicole and Noah. This excerpt is from her forthcoming novel: *Pomegranate*.

About the Contributors

David Acosta: I am staff at EPCC. I will always use poetry to make myself and the whole world think differently.

Zaira Xitlali Aguilar: This is my first semester in EPCC, I love taking photographs that tell a story.

Jesus Aguilera: A current student at the Rio Grande Campus

Zaria Akhtar: I am a high school student attending Montwood High School. I enjoy poetry, art, and any way of expression.

Roberto V. Alatríz: Cartoon animator, creator and manager of *Darkar Company*®
www.darkarcompany.com

Aldo Amparan: A student in EPCC, majoring in English and Film.

Vera Araiza: God is my inspiration for everything I do. I realize that with our Him I can't do anything.

Angelina Arellanes-Núñez: Only if I am grateful, can I manage to be humble

Lydia Daniela Arenas: I'm a voice Performance Major. I plan in signing opera professionally. I play violin & piano, and enjoy reading and writing

Cleopatra Arevalo: Student at EPCC Rio Grande, and future student at UTEP.

Guido Armendariz: A High School senior in Lydia Patterson Institute.

Carmen Armendariz: A local photographer.

Luis Armendariz: Luis esta treinton y busca novia!!!

Claudia L. Armendariz: Photography Lover with a Degree in Education. Grad of EPCC as well as w/ an Associates in Liberal Arts.

Jesus Arredondo: Is an EPCC student who has work on Chrysalis and has helped with PaPaGaYo for the last several years.

Annette Baca: 21, Born in Chuco, poet on my free time.

Enzo Baez: I consider my self to be a verry dynamic person that has a taste for many forms of art and luxury.

Caryl Barquin: An aspiring photographer majoring in Media Production.

Kristina Beavileu: 20-year-old student at EPCC, studying graphic design/web design.

Hector Bernal: Born in Cd. Juarez. Lived in El Paso since 1959 Exhibitions: Chamizal N. Memorial, International Museum among others. He is represented by Hall Marcus Gal. and Arts and Framing Gallery

Jessica Blanco: EPCC student.

Jose A. Blanco: I live in Sunland Park, New Mexico. I went to Santa Teresa High, I was in ROTC for 4 years, and I'm majoring in engineering.

Deve Cadena: I'm currently a student and hopefully will graduate by summer of 2008 for Art Education.

Valerie Cadena: Writing is a challenge Acting is a passion. Reading guard literature is habit and living life is an Art

Jon D. Castañeda: A native El Pasoan who loves to write, create art, and sing.

Dolores Castillo: I love my husband. I love dancing. It is my passion

David Chavez: 23 years old, military, hispanic, raised in Mexico.

Norma L. Chavez: Wife, mother, student, and volunteer. Inspired by my children. Blessed by the Lord.

Edna Contreras: A current student who is majoring in chemistry to later work in the field of forensics.

Paul Cordova: I am a returning older student to college with children. I'm glad I'm here; I love to learn new things every semester.

Leslie Council: Leslie is no longer taking hiatus on the other side of the mirror.

Monica De La Torre: I would like to study visual arts, or any kind of artistic expression.

Darvis Deshod: You do not have to believe in evil. Evil still exist and will test good spirits.

Diana Diaz: Loves to write poetry and is currently working on a novel.

Teresa Duran: A Valle Verde English Instructor at EPCC.

Aileen A. Escarcega: Loves to take pictures and capture the beauty of the moment.

Francisco Espinoza: Naci con el donde la musica, y la musica es mi pasion, sobre todo cuando la musica contiene un mensaje positivo a la vida y al amor. Naci en el estado de Nayarit - en 1959, Ge cinoartudi tidi de mi a los Jovenes del Paso Community College.

Ruben Fernandez: I'm 27 years old and studying sociology. Family man.

Robert Ferrell: Mr. Ferrell teaches philosophy at Rio Grande Campus. He has been living in the area for over 30 years.

Hugo Fierro: Let your soul flow

Julio Fierro: Enjoys art and music.

Geraldine Flaudi-Taft: Is a member of the Creative Writing Class at the Eastside Senior Citizens Center

Bob Foster: I live to love

Michael Gaba: Traveling is a passion that has taken me to all 50 states and 123 countries.

Tammy Galvan: A homemaker, has a son, a daughter, and grandson. She is inspired by them to write poetry.

Cassie Galvan: A hardcore writer who hopes to make it a career.

Maria E. Gandarilla: Major is psychology and my minor is piano music, but my inspiration is to write poems.

Sonia Felicia Garcia Garcia: MECHS Student, sophomore

Serenity Garcia: My parents named me Serenity Garcia back in March of 1985. I'm in my third year at EPCC.

Wayne E. Gibbs: African American, 48 Loves poetry and women.

Armando Goana, Jr.: Poetical Xicanismo

Aida E. Gonzalez: Attends EPCC. Plans to study photography and architecture.

Joshua Gonzalez: I walk, I see, I speak, and I listen. I do my best to find other meaning.

Lisa Gonzalez: I'm a 20-year old student at EPCC majoring in English.

James Gonzalez: Is an English instructor at the Valle Verde Campus and has coordinated the EPCC Poetry Slam for the past twelve years.

Noely Ann Gonzalez: Writing is my life; I believe words are a human's best way of expression.

Griselda Guilbarteau: Breathe love in my air.

David Hernandez: I'm a student at EPCC Valle Verde campus pursuing a Creative Writing Major.

Arlene Hernando: Works for the EPCC senior adult program, and is assistant to senior adult program Latin dance instructor.

Cynthia Herrera: A proud Hispanic mother, student, and daughter.

Joseph K. Hobdy: I am a 22-yr-old singer/songwriter whose purpose in life is to be a servant of the One who gives me the strength to carry on.

Krystal Hoganson: A world traveler, tethered but not anchored

Jim Iholt: A poet and Geologist.

Eduardo Juarez: The new age Renaissance man of El Paso Community College.

James T. Knov: Married, one son, one step-daughter graduated UT-Austin, graduate work UTEP.

Jacqueline N. Lasher: I am a third semester student who has a passion for the written word.

Adam Laird: Age 9. 4th grade at Vista Hills Elementary

Lilly Little: A clinical therapist and adjunct professor at EPCC.

Zachary Little: A Freshman at Burges HS. He is an El Paso poet, writer, musician, as well as an engineer major.

Keith E. Mallard, Jr.: Aspiring writer and scriptwriter hailing from Belzoni, Ms. Influential writers are Eudora Welty, James Baldwin, among others.

Andrew Mammei: I am a poet, writer, graphic artist, photographer and musician.

Maricarmen Marrufo: Born in El Paso. 18 yrs old PRO-LIFE

Isaac Medina: Also known as I-sax, I work off the love given to me from above.

Ricardo Mejia: A twenty-three year old from EPCC majoring in criminal justice.

Rafael Melendez: Published Novelist (NMSU - Las Cruces) and produced on read playwright in NY - TX - CA - AZ - DR

Jose Antonio Mendoza: Interesting-one word description

Alonzo Mesa: EPCC student.

Jose A. Meza: 30 yrs old. Born Camargo, Chihuahua lived in El Paso since 2004.

Diana Mojica: I like to write poetry to awaken the sleeping romantic that lies inside my heart.

Carolina Monsivais: A founding member of the Women Writer's Colective and has her MFA in Creative Writing from New Mexico State University

Martha Morales: EPCC student.

Anna Munguia: A student at EPCC married and with a daughter.

Griselda Muños: A student at EPCC.

Carla Newman: An instructor at EPCC, sometimes writes poetry when she should be grading papers.

Vincent Anthony Norwood: Currently employed at EPCC (12 years); Bachelors in Social Work; Texas Vet.

Tafari Nugent: Born in Brooklyn, New York. Looking for freedom.

Irene Nuñez: I am a staff member of EPCC in the Payroll Department

Graciella Ogaz: Majoring in zoology, and believe are surroundings are the factor of our imagination.

Mary T. M. Ojeda: I am very proud to humbly announce that I am the 2005-2006 Employee of the Year for EPCC.

Esther F. Olivares: A college student majoring in Biology, she enjoys writing poetry and dramas.

Rebekah Omelas: I am a student, like any other, studying to get a head in life.

Gabriela Ontiveros: The first one in her family to go to college and graduating soon.

Rosa Pacheco: Born and raised in El Paso, have been a writer for almost 10 years, no question asked.

Sandra Padilla: I am a reading instructor at TM.

Judy Isabel Parra: A struggling Creative Writing Major attending both EPCC and UTEP in hopes of attaining a Master's Degree at NMSU and actually get paid to write.

Lourdes A. Paul: 22 years old. EPCC student from Mexico.

Michele Pedroza: I'm getting my BA kinesiology for physical therapy.

Ruth Peña: A native El Pasoan and instructor, Ruth writes about what matters most to her: family, regeneration, hope, faith and individuality. Some of her poems have been published in The Rio Grande Review; Sin Fronteras/ Writers Without Borders; Chrysalis; and Border Senses.

David Perea: Former navy journalist (2001-2006) Born in El Paso

Ryan Perry: My life is an act of revenge. The meaning of all this is on the way.

Ileana Prieto: I am a 22 year old living in San Elizario, in a family of 8, working

and studying to become a High School English teacher.

Jackie Ramirez: I'm 34 years old, mother of three, born and raised in El Paso, and army veteran.

Juan F. Ramirez: I'm a writer, artist & inspiring filmmaker who is currently deciding what boxers to wear

Jennifer Ramirez: Is the mother of two daughters and a student at EPCC

Brenda Janeth Reyes: I am a junior of EPCC.

Denise Rios: I was born in Ciudad Juarez Chih. Mexico in 1988, and moved to El Paso, Texas 6 years later and am now attending EPCC at the Rio Grande campus.

Lourdes Rivero: I am currently a part-time student at EPCC. Writing poetry is part of my life.

Roberto Rodriguez: Currently a student EPCC

Roberta A. Rodriguez: She is a graduate of University of Phoenix and has work for EPCC for 18 yeas.

Valerie A. Rodriguez: A second year student at EPCC.

Israel Roman: This was my first time writing a poem at EPCC. I had a great experience doing it.

Betty Ruiz: A gargantuan lover of semantics, syntax and sesquipedalions. A student and teacher of lifes magic.

Alissa Marie Sanchez: I am a person with a great sense of humor, imagination, and who loves the extraordinary.

Martha E. Sanchez: I write to set my spirit free - so my ulter ego can soar like an eagle . . . and my women's voice comes alive.

Omar Santos: Former EPCC student 3rd yr in Chrysalis staff. The legend continues.

Charlotte A. Schaefer: I'm just a great grandma who likes a little humor satire in her life.

John Seigel: Drawings were done inside my house.

Mary Shaner: Is working to attain a Bachelor's Degree in Animation and Film Studies, as well as a Master's Degree in English.

Justin R. Sharp: Born in Beaumont, TX

Terry Josah Sharp: Is a lover of music, was raised in a musically gifted family and is ready to take the next step to becoming a star.

Nigel Sherman: Is a first year student at EPCC and started as a musician and then expanded into drawing in Aug. of 2007

Noah Slavin: One of the best Guitar Hero player and future animator.

Mario Solorzano: To paint a Halluciogenic image.....

Matthew Stephenson: I am a self-motivated artist. Born and raised in El Paso.

Myranda Summers: A student at Picacho Middle School in Las Cruces, NM.

Xavier "Angel X" Thomas: "I too shall be brought low by death, but until then let

me win glory." – Homer, Illiad, Book XVIII

Bren Truesdale: UTEP and EPCC student

Nellie Ugarte: A teacher

Eduardo Uranga Sen: Art student, seeking BA in sculpture and printmaking.
President of the Art Society at EPCC Valle Verde.

David A. Urquidi: Student at EPCC and I didn't choose writing, it chose me.

Louis H. Valles: I am a part time ESAL instructor at Rio Grande campus.

Arnold Varela: I'm a Dental Hygiene sophomore at EPCC.

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Desert Butterfly

